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The Smaller Cambridge Bible for  
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THE BOOK  
OF  
JUDGES

WITH MAP INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

JOHN SUTHERLAND BLACK, M.A.

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EDITED FOR THE SYNDICS OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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\* \* The Text adopted in this edition is that of Dr Scrivener's  
 \* *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. In the notes, the renderings of the Revised Version of 1885 are printed in Clarendon type.

## ABBREVIATIONS.

- A.V. Authorised Version of 1611.
- R.V. Revised Version of 1885.
- Heb. The original Hebrew.
- LXX. The Septuagint : (A) Alexandrian text ; (B) Vatican text ; (Luc.) Lucian's text.
- Syr. Syriac Version.
- Vulg. The Vulgate.
- Lit. Literally.

Arabic Geographical Terms : W. or Wady, watercourse, especially of a non-perennial stream. N. or Nahr, perennial stream. J. or Jebel, mountain.

\* \*  
 \*

To my friend Professor W. Robertson Smith I am indebted for much advice and assistance generously given at every stage in the preparation of this little work, and very specially in connection with the notes on chaps. v. and ix. His initials have been appended to some hitherto unpublished emendations of the text which have been suggested by him.

J. S. B.

1st Oct., 1892.



## INTRODUCTION.

1. *Title and Subject.*—The Book of Judges (Heb. *shôphetim*), so called because it has the exploits of the Twelve Judges (see below) for its main subject, comprises along with the first chapters of 1 Samuel the history of Israel from the settlement in Canaan to the establishment of the monarchy under Saul. In its present form it reads as a direct continuation of the Book of Joshua (i. 1: "it came to pass after the death of Joshua"), but has no such direct link of connection either with the Book of Samuel which follows it in the Hebrew canon or with that of Ruth which succeeds it in the Greek, Latin and English Bibles. We shall see, however, when we proceed to analyse it, that the greater part of the book must once have existed in the form of one or more independent narratives, which were afterwards worked into the continuous series of "the Former Prophets" (Joshua, Judges, Samuel 1 and 2, Kings 1 and 2) by an editorial hand.

2. *Analysis.*—The main division of the book, viz. the history of the Twelve Judges (from which the whole has its name), extends from ii. 6 to xvi. 31. It is preceded by a short account of the settlement of the Hebrews in Canaan (i. 1—ii. 5) and followed by two Appendices (xvii. 1—xxi. 22). Each of these sections may be considered separately.

(a) The *first* section (i. 1—ii. 5) gives a summary account of the settlement of Israel in Canaan with a survey of the parts of the land occupied by the Hebrews and those in which the Canaanites continued to hold their own. The survey is not quite complete: i. 1—21 treats of Judah, and incidentally of Simeon and Benjamin; i. 22—29 of Joseph; the following verses (30—36) deal very briefly with Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali and Dan; and the section closes with a notice of the transference of the ark from Gilgal to Bethel, to which is added, probably by a later hand, an account of a revelation admonishing the people of the evil they have brought on themselves by mingling with the Canaanites: see notes on ii. 1—5. It is important

to note that, in spite of ver. 1, ch. i. covers the same ground with the Book of Joshua. "It is impossible to regard the warlike expeditions described in this chapter as supplementary campaigns undertaken after Joshua's death; they are plainly represented as the first efforts of the Israelites to gain a firm footing in the centre of the land (at Hebron, Debir, Bethel), in the very cities which Joshua, in the book that bears his name, is related to have subdued (Josh. x. 39). And this is confirmed by the circumstance that in Judg. ii. 1 the 'angel of Jehovah,' who, according to Ex. xiv. 24, xxiii. 20, xxxii. 34, xxxiii. 2, 7 seq., must be viewed as having his local manifestation at the headquarters of the host of Israel, is still found at Gilgal and not at Shiloh (Josh. xviii. 1). Here then we have an account of the first settlement of Israel west of the Jordan which is parallel to the book of Joshua, but makes no mention of Joshua himself, and places the tribe of Judah in the front. The author of the chapter cannot have had Joshua or his history in his eye at all, and the passage, Josh. xv. 13—19, which corresponds to Judg. i. 10—15, 20, is either derived from our chapter, or from an earlier source common to both. It follows from these considerations that the words, 'Now after the death of Joshua' in Judg. i. 1 are from the hand of the editor, who desired to make the whole book of Judges, including chap. i., read continuously with that which precedes it in the canon of the earlier prophets." It also follows that Judg. i. is drawn from documents of great antiquity and corresponding value. From it we learn that the conquest was very partial at first, and that the ultimate subjugation and absorption (rather than extermination) of the Canaanites was not the result of two or three campaigns but the gradual work of centuries (see below, sect. 4).

(b) *The Twelve Judges* (ii. 6—xvi. 31). This section may be looked on as a book by itself. It has a plan of its own and a separate *Introduction*: ii. 6—iii. 6 (see *Comm.*). Note how this introduction begins by resuming (ii. 6—10) what had been said in Josh. xxiv. 28—31, thus connecting the story of the judges directly with the Book of Joshua, and not with Judges i. 1—ii. 5 (cp. the similar resumption which connects Ezra with Chronicles; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 22 sq., Ezra i. 1—3). As regards the plan of the section, its most obvious feature—already foreshadowed in the introduction—is that it represents the history as falling into a succession of periods of foreign oppression (the punishment of the people's sin) and of deliverance and prosperity under a judge or divinely appointed leader raised up in answer to the people's penitent prayer. Thus: iii. 8, God is angry with Israel, and sells them into the hand of Chushan-Rishathaim; ver. 9—11, they cry to the Lord, who sends

Othniel to deliver them, and the land has rest 40 years; ver. 12—14, Israel again does evil and is made to serve the king of Moab 18 years; ver. 15—30, the children of Israel cry unto the Lord, who sends Ehud to deliver them, and the land has rest 80 years. This plan however is strictly carried out only for six oppressions and six judges, according to the following scheme :

<i>Oppression</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Deliverer</i>	<i>Period of rest</i>
Chushan-Rishathaim	8 yrs.	Othniel	40 yrs.
Moabites	18 "	Ehud	80 "
Canaanites	20 "	Deborah and Barak	40 "
Midianites	7 "	Gideon	40 "
Ammonites	18 "	Jephthah	6 "
Philistines	40 "	Samson	[20] <sup>1</sup> "
	111		206

The judges named in this table are commonly called the six greater judges. The names of the other six (the minor judges) are not connected with any vicissitudes of sin, oppression and repentance. They are as follows:

Shamgar <sup>2</sup>	.	.	.	.	.	0
Tola	.	.	.	.	.	23
Jair	.	.	.	.	.	22
Ibzan	.	.	.	.	.	7
Elon	.	.	.	.	.	10
Abdon	.	.	.	.	.	8
						<hr/> 70

As the history now reads one would conclude that the whole narrative is consecutive, each new incident being introduced by such words as "and after him" (iii. 31), "and again" (iv. 1), &c. But here the difficulty arises that, according to 1 Kings vi. 1, the entire period, from the exodus to the foundation of the temple in Solomon's fourth year, is but 480 years, or 12 generations of 40 years each. But the wilderness wanderings and the reign of David are two forties; while the period of Joshua and the elders, and that of Samuel and Saul, though not precisely dated in our texts, cannot be much less than two full generations, thus leaving for the judges but 320 years, minus the four years of Solomon, *i.e.* 316. This is precisely the sum of the years of the oppressions and the six greater judges, but leaves no room for the minor judges, who thus seem to lie outside the chronological scheme as they also lie

<sup>1</sup> The years of Samson are included in "the days of the Philistines:" Judg. xv. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Shamgar is not formally called a judge and no period of rule is assigned to him.



outside the cycle of oppressions and deliverances. From all this it appears that the continuity of the history and chronological data of the book is only apparent. Indeed a careful study of the individual narratives soon shows us that many of the judges had only a limited sphere of influence, so that two or more of them may very well have been contemporaneous. In like manner several of the oppressions touched only a part of the land (see *Comm.*). It is evident that the compiler of the book had access to a number of traditions, written or unwritten, referring to individual heroes, which had been handed down from generation to generation in the families of the judges, or among their tribesmen, and were doubtless rehearsed from time to time in popular gatherings at the local sanctuaries and elsewhere. Some of these traditions were told in explanation of ancient poems (Deborah) or of local usages (Jephthah's daughter); others were associated with the graves of heroes (x. 2, 5, xii. 7, 10, 12, 15); others, like that of Samson, have more the character of popular winter tales. For the most part the compiler set down these stories as he found them; his own hand shows itself mainly in the "framework," which gives the narrative its apparent unity partly by means of short connecting links and partly by larger additions enforcing the religious view of the history as a series of judgments and acts of grace proportioned to the people's sin and repentance. Many critics are of opinion that the work of compilation here indicated was not effected by a single hand, but by at least two successive editors, one pre-Deuteronomic, the other Deuteronomistic, *i.e.* writing after Josiah's reformation (2 K. xxiii.) and under the influence of the Book of Deuteronomy, which then for the first time became the public law of Israel. This however is a question of little importance for the practical understanding of the book; it is enough for the student to distinguish between the ancient separate narratives and the editorial additions, and to note that the latter are akin in tone and spirit to the exposition of the religious meaning of Israel's history given in Deuteronomy<sup>1</sup>.

(c) *Appendices*: (1) Micah's sanctuary and the migration of the Danites (xvii., xviii.); (2) the crime of Gibeah and its punishment (xix.—xxi.).

These narratives are independent of one another and of the

<sup>1</sup> According to Prof. Driver "the parts of ii. 6—xvi. 31 which either belong wholly to the Deuteronomic compiler or consist of elements which have been expanded or largely recast by him, are—ii. 11—23; iii. 4—6; 7—11 (almost entirely: there are no *details* of Othniel's judgeship such as constitute the narratives respecting Ehud, Barak, etc.); 12—15 *a*; 30 *b*; iv. 1—3; v. 31 *b*; vi. 1, 7—10; vii. 27 *b* (probably), 28 *b*, 33—34, 35 (based on ch. ix.); x. 6—16, 17, 18 (based on ch. xi.); xiii. 1; xv. 20; xvi. 31. All these parts are connected together by a similarity of tone and phraseology, which stamps them as the work of a different hand from that of the author (or authors) of the histories of the Judges themselves" (*Introd. to Lit. of Old Test.* p. 158).

main stock of the book with which they are not brought into chronological connection. They interrupt the history of the Philistine oppression, which is resumed in the Book of Samuel. "The first narrative, that of Micah and the Danites, belongs to the most primitive strata of the Old Testament history, and is of the highest interest both as a record of the state of religion and for the accurate picture it gives of the way in which one tribe passed from the condition of an invading band into settled possession of land and city. The history of the Levite and the Benjamites is of quite another character, and presupposes a degree of unity of feeling and action among the tribes of Israel which it is not easy to reconcile with the rest of the book. In its present form this episode appears to be not very ancient; it resembles the Book of Ruth in giving a good deal of curious archaeological detail (the feast of Shiloh) in a form which suggests that the usages referred to were already obsolete when the narrative was composed."

3. *Date*.—From what has been said it appears that the Book of Judges contains elements of very various date. The song of Deborah is contemporary with the events to which it refers, and the prose narratives contain many lively traits which must have been derived from eyewitnesses; while on the other hand the double accounts of such matters as the war with Midian (see *Comm.*) are most naturally explained as due to fluctuations of oral tradition in the course of generations. To the compiler of the history of the Twelve Judges "the days when there was no king in Israel" belong to the remote past; and the distance between his point of view and that of the constituent narratives is so great as to carry us far down into the period of the Kings. It has been already observed that the religious philosophy of the editorial "framework" resembles that of the Book of Deuteronomy, which points to the period after Josiah's great reformation. The appendix (xviii. 30) refers to the captivity of northern Israel. In its final form in the Canon the Book of Judges is part of a continuous history extending from Joshua to the Babylonian Exile, so that the last editor must have lived after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

#### 4. *Israel under the Judges.*

(a) *Contact with the Canaanites.* The conquest of Western Palestine was begun from the east, where after traversing the wilderness the Israelites formed their first settlements. These lay on the pastoral and agricultural table-land between the deep valley of the Jordan on the west and the Syro-arabian desert on the east, and extended as it would seem, in those early days, from the Arnon on the south to the Jabbok on the north (for, according to Judg. x. 4, the permanent settlement of

the Manassite clan of Machir to the north of the Jabbok took place after the time of Joshua).

Western Palestine was entered by the fords opposite Jericho, and a secure footing soon afterwards established on the hill-country of Joseph, Benjamin and Judah. Here the Israelites occupied an almost insular position, having the Philistines and Canaanites on the maritime plain to the west, the Canaanites in the plain of Esdraelon and valley of the Jordan on the north and east, and the Amalekites or other nomadic peoples on the south. But even this isolated "hill-country" of theirs was almost bisected by a chain of Canaanite possessions (Gezer, Jebus, &c.), and was further broken up by such cities as the Canaanite Shechem in its very heart.

On the north of the plain of Esdraelon the Israelites also established an insulated position, having the Canaanites on the south, the Phoenicians on the west, and the Hittites and Syrians (Aramaeans) on the north and east. But here again they had not all their island to themselves; there were Canaanites everywhere among them, and in the territories of Asher and Naphtali these were the numerically predominant element: the Israelites there only "dwelt among the Canaanites" (Judg. i. 32, 33).

The Israelite population was most compact in the country of Joseph. But even here we must try not to miss the full force of the expression that "the Canaanites dwelt among them." For the close contiguity meant a continual mutual influence, tending to ever closer assimilation and to the ultimate absorption of the one in the other,—especially after the failure of the last attempt of the Canaanites under Sisera to establish their sovereignty in the land. The final issue was that the Canaanites disappeared in the people of Jehovah; but this was not fully effected till the days of the kingship, and in the meantime the conquered race had made a deep and ineffaceable mark on its conquerors. In passing from nomadic to settled life the Israelites necessarily learned agriculture, architecture and other arts of a stable society from the earlier inhabitants; and this could not take place without their being exposed to many subtle influences in the sphere of religion. In all ancient societies that have advanced beyond the nomadic stage husbandry and worship are very closely bound up together, the chief religious occasions being those in which the blessing of heaven is invoked on harvest, vintage, and other seasons of the agricultural year. So it was with the Canaanites, and among the Hebrews in like manner the feasts of the passover and pentecost were in great measure harvest feasts and that of tabernacles associated with the vintage (see note on ix. 27). One sees how readily this circumstance would lead to the adoption of Canaanite



religious observances. The 'framework' of the Book of Judges is full of references to the corrupting influence of Canaanite religion, which it habitually expresses by saying that the Israelites forsook Jehovah for the Baalim and Ash-taroath. But we must not suppose that the men of the age of the judges were generally conscious of any deliberate apostasy from the national God. Wholly to abstain from adopting Canaanite forms of worship while accepting the Canaanite system of agriculture, of which certain religious observances formed an integral part, would have required a clearer religious insight than the mass of the people possessed; and hence a dangerous confusion between the attributes of Jehovah and the Baalim might ensue without any conscious act of apostasy.

(b) *Relations with surrounding nations.* Though the record of foreign wars and oppressions fills a considerable space in the Book of Judges, the period between the close of the Canaanite wars and the beginning of the Philistine oppression must in the main have been one of peaceful development. The wars with Ammon and Moab touched but a small part of the country; and the inroads of the Midianites were soon checked. Of the Mesopotamian suzerainty we have no details, but only eight years are assigned to it. With the Phoenicians, whose ports formed an outlet for the agricultural produce of Canaan, the Hebrews were habitually in peaceful relations; and the Syrians on the north-east were not yet formidable neighbours. Of the conditions on the southern frontier we know but little; it may be presumed that Judah had many struggles with the Amalekites and other southern nomads, but except in chap. i. our book scarcely touches on the history of that tribe, which is not even named in the song of Deborah.

(c) *Internal Development: social and religious condition.* When the Hebrews entered Canaan they were rather a federation of tribes than a compact nation. The tribes were united by the recognition of their common descent, and still more by their common worship of Jehovah; but, except when the approach of a formidable enemy compelled them to act together, their unity seldom found practical expression and was often overborne by local jealousies. The tribes themselves were subdivided into clans and local communities, each of which was practically an independent society. This is the true meaning of the so-called anarchy of the period of the judges. We are not to understand that there was no law and order; for each family had its head, and each community its elders, whose authority, backed by the force of custom, and if necessary by an appeal to the sanctuary, was generally

respected. We know from the example of other Semitic societies that a simple pastoral or agricultural community may get on very well in time of peace without a formal executive; no man can afford to defy the decisions of the elders based on customary law and supported by public opinion. In extreme cases the community claims the right of banishing a member, and acts of gross violence are dealt with by the law of *talio* or of blood revenge. It is only in time of war that a single leader becomes indispensable and is invested by general consent with something of kingly authority which a man of wisdom and courage may often retain throughout the whole course of his life. Such leaders were Ehud and Barak, Gideon and Jephthah; while several of the minor judges were perhaps rather heads of great families, deriving their authority from the distinction of their birth and the number of their relations and dependants.

At the beginning of the period of the judges the ark seems to have been at Bethel (see ii. 1, note), while at the close of the same period it was at Shiloh (1 Sam. iv. 3), but it is not expressly mentioned in the Book of Judges save in xx. 27. The worship of Jehovah by altar and sacrifice was in no way restricted to the precincts of the sanctuary of the ark. The worship at various local high-places which continued to be the practice of Israel throughout the monarchy was in free use from the first occupation of Canaan at numerous sanctuaries consecrated either by some divine manifestation or by the presence of some sacred object. These sanctuaries were sometimes in private hands (Micah), but in other cases they were common to a whole family or community (Ophrah). Their furniture, we gather, included a *maçceba* or sacred pillar (see ix. 6, note) and an ephod or some kind of sacred image (see viii. 27, notes); and much importance was attached to the presence of a duly qualified priest, conversant with the traditions of the priestly order. For this kind of service Levites were preferred, but these did not require to be Levites of the family of Aaron.

## THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

**N**OW after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the 1  
children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go  
up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? 2  
And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have de-  
livered the land into his hand. And Judah said unto Simeon 3  
his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight  
against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into  
thy lot. So Simeon went with him. And Judah went up; 4  
and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into

### PART I. CHAP. I. 1—II. 5. INTRODUCTORY. THE CONQUEST OF WESTERN CANAAN.

On the relation of this division of the Book of Judges to the narrative of Joshua's conquest in the Book of Joshua, see *Introd.*

1. *asked the Lord*] presumably by the priestly oracle or lot of Urim and Thummim (Numb. xxvii. 21); cp. 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, where other means of learning the Divine will are mentioned. *go up*] *i.e.* from Gilgal in the deep Jordan valley; see note on ii. 1. *Canaanites*] the people of Western Canaan. On the name Canaanite, see, further, notes on iii. 3, 5. 2. *Judah*] The precedence and prominence here and in xx. 18 assigned to Judah do not appear elsewhere in the Book of Judges; see especially chap. v. *the land*] not all Canaan, but the land of Judah—his “lot;” see ver. 3, and cp. ver. 27 (“that land”). 3. *my lot... thy lot*] Here “lot” is not a conquered territory assigned to a tribe, but a territory assigned to it to conquer. Contrast Josh. xix. 1.

4—21. Conquest of Southern Canaan by Judah and allies.

4. *Perizzites*] These were Canaanites, apparently the rural population—those who were scattered up and down the country in villages (*perázôth*) as distinguished from those who were massed together in towns or “cities.” Cp. Hivites, the inhabitants of *havôth* or [tent] “hamlets” (x. 4). *Bezek*] As the expedition started from Gilgal this Bezek must have lain between Gilgal and Jerusalem (if it was not Jerusalem itself), and must be carefully distinguished from the Bezek of 1 Sam. xi. 8, which may perhaps be the modern Ibzik (between Shechem and Beth-shean). It has been thought by some that the words “in Bezek” here and in ver. 5 may have come in by an error, the proper name Adoni-bezek

- their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand  
 5 men. And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek: and they fought  
 against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites.  
 6 But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and  
 7 caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And  
 Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their  
 thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under  
 my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And  
 8 they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died. Now the  
 children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had  
 taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set  
 the city on fire.
- 9 And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight  
 against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in

---

being wrongly taken to mean "lord of Bezek," and this leading  
 to the further assumption that he fought beside his own city.  
 5. *Adoni-bezek*] This is the reading of LXX. also in Josh. x.  
 1, 3, where the present Hebrew text has "Adoni-zedek, king of  
 Jerusalem." The name Adoni-zedek is similar to Melchizedek, and  
 means "lord of righteousness." It is impossible to say whether  
 Adoni-zedek or Adoni-bezek was the original form of the name of  
 the king who was known to tradition as the first enemy of the  
 Hebrews in that quarter of Palestine. Ver. 7 (see note) perhaps  
 implies that Jerusalem was the capital of Adoni-bezek. *and*

*they slew*] We are not to understand a second battle, distinct from  
 that in ver. 4. 6. *cut off his thumbs, &c.*] So as to make him  
 unfit for war. A similar mutilation, incapacitating a man for  
 aiming an arrow, is mentioned in 1 Sam. xi. 2. In like manner the  
 Athenians are alleged to have cut off the thumbs of their prisoners  
 after their victory over the Aeginetans, so as to unfit them for  
 rowing.

7. *Threescore and ten*] A round number. But  
 the title 'king' (*melek*) was given even to very petty chieftains.  
*gathered*] Comp. Ps. civ. 28; Mt. xv. 27. *under my table*]

A hyperbolic expression. Like dogs they fed on his broken meat.  
*they brought him*] *i.e.* presumably, his own people, who still held  
 Jerusalem (see next verse). The Israelites therefore seem to have  
 let him go.

8. *had fought...taken...smitten*] or, rather,  
**fought, took, smote**, (R.V.) *i.e.* after the death of Adoni-bezek.  
 The ungrammatical translation of A.V. is due to its interpretation  
 of ver. 7, according to which it is the victors who bring Adoni-bezek  
 to Jerusalem. From xix. 12, and especially from 2 Sam. v. 6—9,  
 we learn that Jerusalem did not fall into Israelite hands until  
 David's time, and our verse seems to be an anticipatory notice of  
 this victory. See also ver. 21 below.

9. *went down*] The  
 Hebrews, like the Arabs, speak of "going down" into battle with-  
 out necessarily implying descent to lower ground (1 Sam. xxvi. 10;  
 Judg. v. 11). *mountain...south...valley*] R.V. **hill-country...**

**South...lowland.** The territory of Judah is in Josh. xv. and  
 elsewhere regarded as divided into four distinct regions: the Negeb



the south, and in the valley. And Judah went against the 10 Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron

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or South, the Lowland or Shephelah, the Hill-country (Har), and the Wilderness (Midbar). Of these the most extensive and at the same time the least valuable is the Negeb (lit. "Dryness"), consisting of all the Judæan territory to the south of (say)  $31^{\circ} 16' N.$ , or "the mountain ridge which commences not far from (the Judæan) Carmel, and runs W.S.W. to the latitude of Beer-sheba" (Robinson). As the name implies, it is comparatively waterless, and such vegetation as it has is chiefly seen during the short spring season; on the south it imperceptibly merges into the stony desert. In ancient times it seems to have been more fertile than at present, and at several places there are traces of sedentary populations; but these can never have been large, and most of the inhabitants were, as all now are, essentially nomadic. The Shephelah or Lowland, the most valuable part of the Judæan territory, remained almost continuously for the greater part of its extent in the hands of the Philistines. The word is sometimes translated Plain, but not quite correctly; in point of fact the region is for the most part of a gently undulating character (cp. "the shoulder of the Philistines": Isa. xi. 14, R.V.). It is very rich in pasture meadows, cornfields, oliveyards, vineyards and gardens, and has a large number of towns and villages, almost invariably perched on comparatively elevated sites. About 16 or 20 miles from the sea-coast begin the "slopes" (Josh. x. 40, R.V.) which mark the transition from the Shephelah to the Hill-country of Judah. The backbone of the Hill-country consists of a limestone ridge, separating the waters flowing to the Mediterranean from those which drain eastwards to the Dead Sea; it attains a maximum elevation of over 3,000 feet about Hebron. The hills are sometimes bare, but more often covered with herbage and shrubbery; the lower slopes are admirably adapted for the culture of the vine, and the valleys are often very fertile. The Wilderness of Judah consists of the eastern versant of the central ridge. The descent is very steep, and, except along the crest of the ridge and at a few oases where there are springs near the edge of the Dead Sea, almost absolutely bare and barren. To this region belong the wildernesses of Tekoa (2 Chron. xx. 20), Ziph (1 Sam. xxiii. 14 sq., xxvi. 2), Maon (1 Sam. xxiii. 24 sq.), and En-gedi (1 Sam. xxiv. 1). Of the towns mentioned below, Hebron lay in the hill-country; Debir is here (ver. 15) reckoned to the south, or Negeb, but in Josh. xv. 49 it is reckoned to the hill-country; probably it may be taken as approximately marking the border. Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron (ver. 18) were of course in the "lowland."

**10.** *Judah*] or, as in Josh. xv. 14, "Caleb," i.e. the Calibbites, a branch of the Kenizzites (see ver. 12). In ver. 20 Judah gives Hebron to Caleb. *Hebron*, formerly Kirjath-arba ("city of Arba," or perhaps "Fourfold town," comp. Tripolis), now Karyat el-Khalil, i.e. "city of [Abraham] the friend [of God]," one of the most famous towns of the Bible, lies in the hill-country of Judah, 3,000 feet above sea-level, about 18 m. S. by W. from Jerusalem.

- before *was* Kirjath-arba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman,  
 11 and Talmi. And from thence he went against the inhabitants  
 of Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjath-sepher.  
 12 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it,  
 13 to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel  
 the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he  
 14 gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. And it came to pass,  
 when she came *to him*, that she moved him to ask of her  
 father a field: and she lighted from off *her ass*; and Caleb  
 15 said unto her, What wilt thou? And she said unto him, Give

According to Nu. xiii. 22 it was founded seven years before Zoan in Egypt. It is frequently mentioned in the patriarchal history, and was one of the places visited by Caleb and Joshua in their survey of Canaan as spies (Nu. xiii. 22). It is enumerated among the cities of refuge in Josh. xx. 7, and among the priestly cities in Josh. xxi. 11—13. As the burial-place of Abraham, it is still sacred both with Jews and with Mohammedans. Comp. with the present passage Josh. xv. 13, 14. A different account of the capture of Hebron is given in Josh. x. 36, 37, where Joshua and all Israel with him are said to have smitten it with the edge of the sword, "its king and all the souls that were therein." *Sheshai*, etc.] LXX. adds "the sons of Anak." See ver. 20; also Nu. xiii. 22, and Josh. xv. 14. 11. *Debir*, formerly Kirjath-sepher and Kirjath-sannah (Josh. xv. 49), lay in the hill-country (Josh. xv. 49), or (ver. 15; Josh. xv. 19) in the south, of Judah; its site has not been identified.

12. *Caleb*] the son of Jephunneh, the prince of the tribe of Judah, whose name occurs so often in the Book of Numbers. Though by adoption or naturalization a member of the tribe of Judah, he was by birth a son of Kenaz, *i.e.* a Kenizzite (Josh. xiv. 6). The Kenizzites are mentioned in Gen. xv. 19, 20 among the ten alien nationalities whose territory was given to the children of Abraham. They were themselves descendants of Abraham (through Eliphaz the Edomite; Gen. xxxvi. 11). They ultimately settled in the Negeb of Palestine, and though of Edomite descent became merged in the tribe of Judah.

13. *Othniel*, son of Kenaz and younger brother of Caleb, was the uncle of Achsah if these terms of relationship be taken literally. But "son" and "brother" are both used in Hebrew somewhat widely; thus, in Gen. xiv. 6, Lot, Abraham's nephew, is spoken of as his brother. Othniel reappears in iii. 9 as the first of the "judges." He survived all the other elders that outlived Joshua by 48 years. In Josh. x. 38, 39 the capture and destruction of Debir are attributed to all Israel.

14. *came*] *i.e.* was conducted to her husband in the wedding procession. *she moved him*] A very slight change in the Hebrew text gives the LXX. rendering: "he moved [*i.e.* instigated] her."

*a field*] a tract of land (as a dowry). *lighted*] in token of reverence; cp. Gen. xxiv. 61. *ass*] cp. v. 10. Horses were first used by the Israelites in the days of Solomon, and then only

me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people. And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it: and the name of the city was called Hormah. Also Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron

for purposes of war. 15. *a blessing*] i.e. a (parting) present; cp. Gen. xxxiii. 11; 2 Kings v. 15. *hast given me, etc.* **hast**

**set me in the land of the South** (R.V.) i.e. in the waterless Negeb. *springs*] or reservoirs—of course along with the ad-

jacent land which they rendered tillable. 16. The Kenites,

the branch of the Midianites to which Zipporah the wife of Moses belonged. In part at least they accompanied the Israelites in their journeyings (Nu. x. 29 sq.) and, as we are here told, ultimately settled within the borders of Judah and became merged in that tribe. According to Judg. iv. 11 (cp. note) at a later date there was a branch of the Kenites also near Kedesh within the borders of Naphtali. *city of palm trees*] i.e. Jericho (Dt. xxxiv. 3). For

the capture of Jericho, see Josh. vi. *wilderness of Judah*] see note on ver. 9. *the south of Arad*] “the Negeb of [i.e. around]

Arad.” Arad is the mod. Tell Arad, 18 m. S. from Hebron. *among the people*] On the evidence of some MSS. of LXX. (cp. 1 Sam. xv. 6) some critics are inclined to read here “among the Amalekites.” The Hebrew word for “people” (*am*) is the first two letters of the name Amalek. 17. *Zephath*, or Hormah (see

also Nu. xxi. 3; Josh. xv. 30; xix. 4), is placed by many modern scholars at the mod. Esbâta or Sebaita (lat. 30° 52' N., long. 34° 41' E.), 24 m. N.N.E. from 'Ain Kudais (Kadesh). Zephath was “utterly destroyed” (lit. “devoted” or “accursed”), whence according to this writer its new name, meaning “Anathema,” “Devotion,” “Destruction.” The root is the Heb. *ḥrm*, the word applied so often in Josh. vi. to denote persons or things devoted to destruction in honour of Jehovah. In Arabic the same root is used of consecrated things and persons generally—of sanctuaries like the Haram at Jerusalem, or of pilgrims under a vow which temporarily withdraws them from common life (cp. *harem*). 18.

*Judah took*] LXX. has “Judah took not,” a reading more in accordance with the facts as stated in ver. 19, and also in Josh. xiii. 2, where the whole country of the Philistines is included in the “very much land” that remained to be possessed after Joshua had finished his conquests. *Gaza*, the mod. Ghazzah, 2½ m. from the sea-coast, “the last inhabited place on the way from Phœnicia to Egypt, at the beginning of the desert” (Arrian), is never otherwise than Philistine in any of the historical books. The same remark



- 19 with the coast thereof. And the LORD was with Judah; and he drave out *the inhabitants of* the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had  
 20 chariots of iron. And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses  
 21 said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak. And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.  
 22 And the house of Joseph, they also went up *against* Beth-el:

applies to *Askelon* or rather Ashkelon, the mod. Asṣalân, on the sea-coast, 12 m. N. from Gaza, and to *Ekron*, the mod. 'Akir, the most northerly of the Philistine towns, in 31° 51' .5 N. lat., 5 m. E. from Jabneh (Yebnah) and 9 m. from the sea-coast. The LXX. adds the name of Ashdod to this list. coast] R.V. **border**, *i.e.* territory.

19. mountain] R.V. **hill-country**. See ver. 9, note. valley] or valley land, Heb. 'emek, must here be practically synonymous with *Shephelah* in ver. 9.

chariots of iron] not necessarily wholly of iron, but as contrasted with the rude agricultural waggons, such as may still be seen in some parts of modern Europe, of which even the wheels and axles were entirely of wood. They may perhaps have been derived by the Canaanites from the Egyptians (1 K. x. 28, 29). In ancient warfare their function was somewhat comparable to that of artillery in modern times. Chariots were first used by the Israelites under Solomon. In the language of the prophets to trust in chariots is to trust in man's resources rather than in God's help (Isa. xxxi. 1; Ps. xx. 7, &c.).

20. as Moses said] R.V. **had spoken**. See Nu. xiv. 24; Dt. i. 36. In Nu. xiii. 22 it is stated that the spies went up by the South and came to Hebron.

Anak] The children of Anak at Hebron and in Philistia (cp. Josh. xi. 21, 22; xiv. 12; xv. 13; xxi. 11), like the Rephaim and Arvinn who were found by the Israelites in Western Palestine, were not held to be Canaanite; they appear to have belonged to an earlier stock which by the time of the Israelite invasion had already been almost entirely expelled or absorbed by the more recent Canaanites and Philistines.

21. This verse is almost identical with Josh. xv. 63, except that here Benjamin is substituted for Judah. In Josh. xv. 8 and xviii. 28 also Jerusalem is reckoned as belonging to Benjamin. It was immediately to the north (*i.e.* on the Benjamite side) of the frontier line as laid down in the Book of Joshua. That the Jebusites were not exterminated by David but continued to form an element in the population of Jerusalem appears from 2 Sam. xxiv. 18, and especially from Zech. ix. 7. The words *unto this day* imply that the verse was written after the time of David and before the Babylonian Captivity.

22—36. Conquest of Northern Canaan by the house of Joseph and other tribes. The capture of Bethel (vv. 22—26) by the house of Joseph—an event not expressly mentioned in the Book of Joshua, though perhaps implied in Josh. viii. 17—is the only incident in the conquest that is particularised; no further exploits of Joseph (Ephraim and Manassah) or of the other tribes are given,



and the LORD *was* with them. And the house of Joseph sent 23  
to descry Beth-el. (Now the name of the city before *was* Luz.)  
And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they 24  
said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the  
city, and we will shew thee mercy. And when he shewed 25  
them the entrance into the city, they smote the city with the  
edge of the sword; but they let go the man and all his family.  
And the man went *into* the land of the Hittites, and built a 26  
city, and called the name thereof Luz: which *is* the name  
thereof unto this day.

Neither did Manasseh drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth- 27  
shean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the

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the incompleteness of the ultimate result being all that the historian here seeks to impress upon us. A few additional fragmentary details from a very ancient source are given in Josh. xvii. Benjamin and Issachar as well as Levi are omitted from the present brief account of the conquest.

22. *Beth-el*] mod. Beitin, 2890 feet above sea-level, 10 miles N. from Jerusalem. It is reckoned to Benjamin in Josh. xviii. 13, 22, but here, and perhaps also in Josh. xvi. 2, to Joseph (Ephraim). In the other historical books it always belongs to the northern kingdom, except for a short time under Abijah (2 Chr. xiii. 19).

23. *descry*] R.V. **spy out**. *Luz*] *i.e.* "almond." See Gen. xxviii. 19.

24. *the entrance*] the point where its defences were weakest, or where it could be most easily surprised.

*shew thee mercy*] R.V. **deal kindly with thee**. 26. *Luz*] Of this second Luz in the land of the Hittites, *i.e.* the Canaanite districts of Coelesyria which were never occupied by Israel, nothing is known.

27. *Manasseh*] Of the territory of Western Manasseh even as defined with some detail in the Book of Joshua (xvii. 7 sqq.) we can say little more than that it was bounded on the north, east, and south, by Asher, Issachar and Ephraim respectively, and that after deduction of the towns and adjacent territories (comp. Josh. xvii. 11) which are enumerated in this verse, it cannot have been very extensive.

*Beth-shean* or Beth-shan, mod. Beisân, 320 feet below sea-level, lay in a well-watered and fertile part of the Jordan valley at the base of the mountains of Gilboa and at the mouth of the Wady Jâlûd, which leads gently up from the Jordan to Zerîn (Jezreel). It is about 3 miles from the Jordan, and was an important stage on the road from Damascus to Egypt, and also from Damascus by Shechem to Jerusalem and Hebron. It is mentioned under the reigns of Saul (1 Sam. xxxi. 10 sqq.), David (2 Sam. xxi. 12), and Solomon (1 Kings iv. 12). The Greek name Scythopolis by which it was known from the Macedonian period (2 Macc. xii. 29—31 &c.) probably records the fact (or belief) that some of the Scythian invaders of the 7th century B.C. had settled there. In the time of our Lord it was one of the most important cities of the so-called Decapolis.

*towns*] lit. "daughters," *i.e.* dependencies.  
*Taanach*] mod. Ta'aunk, on the southern side of the Kishon

- inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.
- 23 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.
- 29 Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.
- 30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor

valley, 607 feet above sea-level,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  m. S.E. from Lejjûn (Megiddo). Comp. Josh. xii. 21; xvii. 11; xxi. 25. The distance from the Kishon is about 3 miles. Like Megiddo, Taanach is mentioned on the Egyptian monuments.

*Dor*] mod. Tentûrah, one of the maritime cities of the plain of Sharon, about 37 miles north from Joppa, in a very fertile country. The Phœnician inscription of Eshmunazar speaks of "Dor and Joppa, the rich cornlands in the plain of Sharon." *Ibleam*] called Bileam in 1 Chr. vi. 70, the mod. Bir Bel'ameh, about a mile to the south of Jenin (En-gannim). It was here that Ahaziah was wounded in his flight from Jezreel (2 K. ix. 27), and Ibleam was also the scene of the murder of Zechariah the son of Jeroboam II. by Shallum; see 2 K. xv. 10, where LXX. (Luc.) establishes the reading "in Ibleam" (BBL'M) instead of "before the people" (KBL'M).

*Megiddo*] The Roman Legio, mod. Lejjûn, 11 m. N.W. from En-gannim, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  m. N.W. from Taanach, on two little hills (552 feet) on the edge of the plain of Esdraelon, commanding one of the most important passes southward, was an important station on the route from Damascus to Egypt, and is mentioned on the Egyptian monuments in a way that shows it must have been fortified from very early times. Solomon made it one of his strongholds (1 K. ix. 15). Here king Ahaziah died (2 K. ix. 27) after his flight from Jezreel. It was in the plain below Taanach and Megiddo that Sisera was defeated by Barak (Judg. v. 19), and in the same neighbourhood Josiah was defeated and slain by Pharaoh-necoh (2 K. xxiii. 29, 30).

*would dwell*] *i.e.* were determined to dwell. 28. *was waxen strong*] Perhaps not till the time of Solomon; comp. 1 K. ix. 20 sqq.

*tribute*] R.V. **taskwork**, *i.e.* forced labour, or tribute of personal service such as was exacted of the Israelites themselves in Egypt (Ex. i. 11; comp. Mt. v. 41).

29. *Ephraim*] For the territory of Ephraim see Josh. xvi. 5—10.

*Gezer*] mod. Tell el-Jezer, on a hill 750 feet above sea-level, 6 m. E. from Ekron and 14 m. from the sea. The utter destruction of its king and people is mentioned in Josh. x. 33, and according to Josh. xxi. 21, it was assigned to the Levites. In 1 Chr. vi. 67 it is enumerated along with other "cities of refuge." It is mentioned in the Philistine wars of David (2 Sam. v. 25; 1 Chr. xiv. 16), and after having been taken by the king of Egypt (1 K. ix. 15) it was given for a portion to his daughter, the wife of Solomon. Solomon fortified it (1 K. ix. 17), and as Gazara it is frequently mentioned in the Maccabean wars (1 Macc. iv. 15 &c.).

30. *Zebulun*] The territory of Zebulun, as defined in the Book

the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries. Neither did Asher drive out <sup>31</sup> the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the <sup>32</sup>

of Joshua (xix. 10—16), lay to the north of the Kishon valley, and included Nazareth, Chisloth-tabor, Daberath, Gath-hepher, and Remmon. Mount Tabor was at the junction of the territories of Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali. *Kitron*] Unknown; comp.

Kattath (Josh. xix. 15). *Nahalol*] Unknown; comp. Nahallal (Josh. xix. 15). *tributaries*] R.V. **tributary**; marg. "subject to taskwork."

**31.** *Asher*] See v. 17. *Accho*] R.V. **Acco**, mod. St Jean d'Acre, is clearly mentioned in the Old Testament only here, but perhaps also once stood in Josh. xix. 30 where we now read Ummah; see LXX. and Syr. Also in Mic. i. 10 "weep not at all" should perhaps be: "weep not in Acco;" so most scholars since Reland, after LXX. It stands on a small promontory at the northern extremity of the Bay of Acre, 26 m. S. from Tyre. It was called Ptolemais by one of the Egyptian Ptolemies, and by this name it is mentioned in Acts xxi. 7. *Zidon* (i.e. "fisher's town"), called "Great Zidon" in Josh. xi. 8, xix. 28, was in ancient times the most important city of Phœnicia (hence "Sidonian" equivalent to "Phœnician;" Dt. iii. 9; 1 K. xvi. 31; comp. *Iliad* vi. 289 seq. &c.). It is the modern Saïda, midway between Tyre and Berytus (Beyrût).

*Ahlab*] Unknown. *Achzib*] mod. ez-Zib, on the sea-shore, 9 m. N. from Acco. *Helbah*] Unknown. *Aphik*, or Aphek (Josh. xix. 30), is probably the same as the Aphek mentioned in Josh. xii. 18, where recent critics emend the verse so as to read: "the king of Aphek in the [plain of] Sharon, one." This Aphek in Sharon is doubtless the city at which the Philistines assembled their forces for war with Israel before the battles of Eben-ezer (1 Sam. iv. 1), and Gilboa (1 Sam. xxix. 1), and from which, at a later date, the Syrians of Damascus made repeated attacks on Samaria (1 K. xx. 26, 30; 2 K. xiii. 17). That it lay in a lowland plain is clear from 1 K. xx. 23, and that the plain in which it lay was that of Sharon appears from the LXX. (Luc.) reading of 2 K. xiii. 22: "and Hazael took the Philistine from his [Jehoahaz's] hand from the Western Sea to Aphek." It lay on the verge of Philistia, i.e. in Sharon, and it would seem that both in Benhadad's and in Hazael's time the Syrians avoided the difficulties of a direct attack on the central mountain-land of Canaan by striking into the maritime plain south of Carmel, and so securing the mastery of the fertile coast-land without having to besiege Samaria. Their route would in fact be the present great road from Damascus to Ramleh through Megiddo. At Aphek, somewhere in the north of the Sharon plain, they had a great military post, from which they could direct their armies either against Samaria or against the Philistines (2 K. xii. 17).

*Rehob*] Unknown. Comp. Nu. xiii. 21; 2 Sam. x. 6, 8. It is not the Beth-rehob of xviii. 28, which lay far outside the limits of Asher. **32.** *dwelt among the Canaanites the in-*



inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.  
 33 Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath  
 34 became tributaries unto them. And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not  
 35 suffer them to come down to the valley: but the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalvim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they  
 36 became tributaries. And the coast of the Amorites *was* from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

*habitants*] This expression shows very clearly how incomplete was Israel's hold on that part of the country. 33. *Naphtali*] The

territory of this tribe (Josh. xix. 32—39) included Ramah, Iron, Hazor, and Kadesh.

*Beth-shemesh*] Unknown. It is to be distinguished from the Beth-shemesh ('Ain Shems) of 1 Sam. vi. 9, which is perhaps alluded to in ver. 35 (*q. v.*). *Beth-anath*] Possibly the mod. 'Ainitha, 12 m. S. from the Litânî river. Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath are named respectively from the local

worship of the sun-god (Shemesh) and the goddess Anath, a Phœnician deity afterwards identified with the Greek Athena. *dwelt among &c.*] See ver. 32, note. *tributaries*] See ver. 30, note.

34. *forced &c.*] Even in the mountain, where they had taken temporary hold, the children of Dan were not unmolested (comp. Josh. xix. 47 LXX.); and, as we shall see (xviii. 1 sqq.), the mass of the tribe migrated northwards during the days of the judges. *Amorites*] See iii. 5. 35. *would dwell*] See above, ver. 28, note.

*in mount Heres in Aijalon, &c.*] R.V. **in mount Heres, in Aijalon, &c.** *Heres*] Unknown. But as *heres* is a synonym of *shemesh* ('sun'), "the mountain of the sun" was perhaps adjacent to the Judaean Beth-shemesh ("temple of the sun"). If Beth-shemesh be really the place intended, it is easy to understand how the Amorites were unwilling to part with it, and (having chariots) were able to hold it. It lies at a height of 917 feet above sea-level on the south side of the W. Surar, and within the limits of the hill-country of Judah; "a noble site for a city—a low plateau at the junction of two fine plains" (Robinson). *Aijalon* is spoken of as Danite in Josh. xix. 42. It is the mod. Yâlo, situated on a ridge on the south side of the broad level valley now known as the Merj Ibn 'Omer. It is alluded to in connection with the famous battle of Beth-horon (Josh. x. 12) and is mentioned in the Philistine wars of David. It was fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chr. xi. 10) and taken from king Ahaz by the Philistines (2 Chr. xxviii. 18). The context here seems to imply that it was reckoned as belonging to the northern kingdom. *Shaalvim*] Unknown. See Josh. xix. 42, where it is called Shaalabbin. It is mentioned along with Beth-shemesh "in the hill-country of Ephraim" in 1 K. iv. 9. *tributaries*] See ver. 30, note. 36. *Amorites*] The context would lead us

And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, 2 and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought

to expect "Edomites" rather than "Amorites" here, and some trace of this having been the original reading is found in LXX. Very little change in the Hebrew is involved. *Akrabbim*] "The ascent of Akrabbim" ("Scorpion-pass"), or Maaleh-acrabbim (see Josh. xv. 2) is not known; it must have been one of the passes out of the Southern Arabah (the southward continuation of the trough or hollow of the Dead Sea) into the waste mountain country to the west. *the rock*] Heb. *Sel'a*. Probably the word is here used as a proper name, and Sela or Petra, the capital of Edom (2 K. xiv. 7; Isa. xvi. 1), is intended. *upward*] i.e. "further."

II. 1—5. From Gilgal to Bochim.

1. *an angel*] R.V. **the angel**. In accordance with Ex. xxiii. 20 sq., xxxii. 34 sq., xxxiii. 2; Nu. xx. 16, where "the angel of Jehovah" goes before the host of Israel and is symbolised by the ark (Nu. x. 35, 36), this clause probably refers to the removal of the ark from Gilgal, where it had stood during the earlier stages of the conquest, to a point further up in the interior of the country. Many old interpreters, particularly the Rabbins, took the word "angel" here to mean "prophet"; cp. below, vi. 8; also Hagg. i. 13. *Gilgal*] mod. Jiljûl or Jiljûlieh, 3 m. S.E. from Tell es-Sultan (ancient Jericho) was the headquarters of Israel and first station of the ark after crossing the Jordan (Josh. iv., v.), and frequently appears as a place of sacrifice or high place in the subsequent history (see 1 Sam. xi. 14, 15, xiii. 7 sqq., xv. 21). Perhaps, like most of the high places whose worship is condemned by the prophets as corrupted by idolatrous practices borrowed from the Canaanite worship of the Baalim, it had been a Canaanite sanctuary before it became a Hebrew holy place. Comp. Hos. iv. 15 and Am. iv. 4, 5, where the worship of Gilgal is condemned, and see below (iii. 19), where mention is made of the stone idols (A.V. "quarries") at Gilgal. *Bochim*] i.e. "weepers." LXX. has "to the weeping place and to Bethel." The place seems to have been near Bethel; perhaps the same as Allon-bachuth ("oak of weeping") which was "below Bethel;" see Gen. xxxv. 8 and cp. below, xx. 23. As Bethel was a patriarchal sanctuary, its vicinity was an appropriate station for the ark. *and said*] Before these words the Hebrew text showed a lacuna, which the ancient copyists have scrupulously noted, marking it in the Hebrew text by a circle, which in modern printing would be represented as follows: "And the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim.....And he said," &c. Most critics consider that the words from "And he said," in ver. 1, down to the middle of verse 5, are later than the rest of the passage, and that what originally stood in the more ancient writer was simply the short statement that the angel of Jehovah went up (before the children of Israel) from Gilgal to Bochim, and that they sacrificed there unto Jehovah. The inserted passage (1 b—5 a) is not, like its parallel (Ex. xxxiv. 12 sqq.), a warning against sins the people were likely to fall into, but an indictment for sins actually committed,—

- you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I  
 2 said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall  
 make no league with the inhabitants of this land; you shall  
 throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice:  
 3 why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not  
 drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as thorns*  
 in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.  
 4 And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake  
 these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people  
 5 lift up their voice, and wept. And they called the name  
 of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the  
 LORD.  
 6 And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of  
 Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the  
 7 land. And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua,  
 and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had  
 seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.  
 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died,

an indictment which would have been appropriate at any subsequent stage in the story of our book, but at this point appears to be premature (contrast ver. 7), and at any rate is not explained by anything mentioned in chap. i. *I made you to go up]* The grammatical

form of this verb in Hebrew shows that the beginning of the sentence has been lost. **2. make no league]** R.V. **covenant.**

Cp. Ex. xxxiv. 12 sqq. The only recorded instance of a covenant with the inhabitants of the land is that made with the Gibeonites (Josh. ix.), but the occurrence was doubtless common enough. *have not obeyed]* The Manassite altar of Baal at Ophrah (vi. 25) and the Canaanite temple of Baal-berith at Shechem (ix. 4) are familiar after-examples of this disobedience. **3. I said]**

Better, "I have said" or "I say"; cp. Josh. xxiii. 13. *as thorns]* These words in the E.V. are supplied, doubtless correctly,

from Nu. xxxiii. 55, Josh. xxiii. 13, the figure employed being that of a man forcing his way through a thorny jungle. But some ancient versions (e.g. LXX.) have: "shall be adversaries unto you." This involves the change of a letter in the Hebrew text. *a*

*snare]* Comp. Ex. xxiii. 33, xxxiv. 12; Josh. xxiii. 13; Judg. viii. 27.

## PART II. CHAP. II. 6—XVI. 31. THE TWELVE JUDGES.

*Section i. Ch. II. 6—III. 6. Introductory.* General survey of the course of the history after the conquest. (1) Closing years of Joshua, ii. 6—10; (2) General account of the causes and consequences of the subsequent troubles of Israel from "enemies round about," ii. 11—19; (3) Another general account of the causes of Israel's troubles through the nations which had been left in Canaan by Joshua (ii. 20—iii. 6).

**6—10.** Comp. Josh. xxiv. 28—31, and see *Introd.* **6. let go]** R.V. **sent away.** **7. served the Lord]** Contrast ii. 2.



*being* an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in 9 the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.

And also all that generation were gathered unto their 10 fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the 11 LORD, and served Baalim: and they forsook the LORD God of 12 their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and 13 served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was 14

*great works*] R.V., more literally, **great work.** 9. *Timnath-heres*] called, by inversion of the Hebrew consonants, Timnath-serah in Josh. xix. 50, xxiv. 30. Its site in the hill-country of Ephraim has not been identified, unless it be the Thamna of Josephus and Pliny, which is represented by the mod. Tibneh, 10 m. N.W. from Bethel.

11—19. In these verses the editor of the Book of Judges points out, in a spirit closely akin to the Book of Deuteronomy, the moral and religious meaning of the old stories of the heroes of Israel. See *Introd.*

11. *Baalim*] R.V. **the Baalim**, *i.e.* the Baals or gods of particular localities worshipped by the Canaanites. The word Baal (*ba'al*) means "lord" or "owner," and the various tribes and communes of Northern Semites applied it each to its own chief divinity. At one time the Israelites bestowed it as a title of honour on their own national God, Jehovah, whence such proper names as Eshbaal and Meribaal, both meaning "man of Baal" or, virtually, "man of God." It was not till Hosea's time that any danger or impropriety was seen in the use of this ambiguous word; that prophet, in speaking of the days when Israel's religion shall have been purified, says that the people shall no longer call Jehovah their Baal (Hos. ii. 16, 17). A literal interpretation of the precept to "make no mention of the name of other gods" (Ex. xxiii. 13) afterwards led to the substitution of Bosheth ("shameful thing") for Baal in the case of historical names; hence arose the forms Ishbosheth, Mephibosheth, Jerubbesheth, &c. The golden calves at Bethel and Dan were originally called Baalim, though held to represent Jehovah. In the present passage the various local gods of the Canaanites as opposed to Jehovah are meant.

12. *people*] R.V. **peoples.** For an enumeration of these see x. 6.

13. This verse is now usually regarded as a later insertion. Note that the author, while substantially repeating what precedes, speaks not of many local Baalim but of one Baal, perhaps the Tyrian Baal (Melcarth), against whom Elijah did battle.

*Ashtaroth*] R.V. **the Ashtaroth**; comp. x. 6, "the Baalim and the Ashtaroth." Ashtaroth is the plural of Ashtoreth (Astarte, Assy. Ishtar), the name of the great Semitic

hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; *but* they did not so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, *that* they returned, and corrupted *themselves* more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers,

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goddess whose worship travelled from Assyria and Babylon to Syria and Phoenicia, and thence to the Israelites (1 Sam. vii. 3; 1 K. xi. 5, 33; 2 K. xxiii. 13) and the Philistines (1 Sam. xxxi. 10). In many Canaanite cults she was worshipped along with the local Baal as his wife, and the plural refers to the multiplicity either of her local forms, or of her images. **14.** *sold*] See Dt. xxxii.

**30.** The figure recurs frequently in Judges (iii. 8, iv. 2, x. 7); see also 1 Sam. xii. 9. *enemies round about*] Comp. ver. 12, note.

**16.** *judges*] The Heb. word is *shôphet* and reappears in the Punic *sufet*, the title borne by the chief magistrates of Carthage (in Latin writers, *sufes*). Ordinarily it implies magisterial and judicial functions (Dt. xvi. 18; Ex. xviii. 13—26; comp. 1 Sam. viii. 5, “a king to judge us”); but here it is used in a connection which suggests the meaning *vindex* rather than *judex*, being practically synonymous with “deliverer” or “saviour;” see also iii. 9, 10, 15, and Neh. ix. 27. This is the primary sense of the word in the expression, “The Lord is our Judge.” **17.** This verse, like ver. 13, is now usually regarded as a later insertion.

**II. 20—III. 6.** This explanation of the history differs from that given in ii. 11—19 in several important respects. (1) The provocation is represented as having been given, once for all, before the completion of the conquest of Palestine. (2) The instruments of Divine punishment are not the nations round about Canaan, but the nations that remain within Canaan itself; they are not called in by



and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not hence- 21  
forth drive out any from before them of the nations which  
Joshua left when he died: that through them I may prove 22  
Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk  
therein, as their fathers did keep *it*, or not. Therefore the 23  
LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily;  
neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua. Now 3  
these *are* the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by  
them, *even* as many of *Israel* as had not known all the wars  
of Canaan; only that the generations of the children of Israel 2  
might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before  
knew nothing thereof: *namely*, five lords of the Philistines, 3  
and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites

a special providence, but it is soon resolved to suffer them to continue as a permanent means of discipline. (3) The purpose for which they are intended is not wholly punitive. Their continued presence is represented either as being a means of moral discipline ("that by them I may prove Israel whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein," ii. 22, cp. iii. 4) or as furnishing each new generation with the means of practising the art of war ("to prove Israel by them...only that the generations of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as beforetime knew nothing thereof," iii. 1, 2). These two different senses of the word "prove" have been thought by some to show that even this section is of composite origin. The different enumerations of the "nations which were left," as given in iii. 3 and iii. 5, point to a similar inference.

3. *lords*] Heb. *serânîm*, the official title uniformly given in the Old Testament to the princes of the Philistine pentarchy. The same word is translated "axle" in 1 K. vii. 30. Comp. *cardinal* from *cardo*, "a hinge."

*Philistines*] These were an alien people who had migrated from Caphtor (Am. ix. 7), perhaps Cyprus or Caria, and seem to have arrived in Canaan not long before the Israelite invasion from the East. They are perhaps the same as the Pulosata who appear as enemies of the Egyptians in Canaan in the time of Rameses III.

*all the Canaanites*] From the order of the enumeration, which seems to be geographical, we are probably to understand here those Canaanites who held the low country between the territory of the Philistines and that of the Zidonians (plain of Sharon, plain of Esdraelon). But perhaps vv. 1—3 may originally have formed the sequel to Ch. i., in which case the expression "all the Canaanites" would naturally become limited to the Canaanites mentioned in that chapter.

*Sidonians*] or *Zidonians*. These were also Canaanites. Indeed all those whom the Greeks called Phoenicians called themselves Canaanites.

*Hivites*] Cp. i. 4, note. The Hivites are met with at Shechem (Gen. xxxiv. 2), in the region of Gibeon (Josh. ix. 7), and on the slopes of Hermon, in Josh. xi. 3. These Northern Hivites (or Hittites as they are called in Josh. xi. 3, LXX.; comp.

- that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto  
 4 the entering in of Hamath. And they were to prove Israel by  
 them, to know whether they would hearken unto the com-  
 mandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers  
 by the hand of Moses.  
 5 And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites,  
 Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and  
 6 Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives,  
 and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

i. 26, note) are here meant, and their seats are more precisely defined as occupying the eastern slope of Lebanon and the upland valley of Coelesyria which separates Lebanon from Hermon and Antilibanus, as far north as the frontier of Hamath. *Mount*

*Baal-hermon*] *i.e.* Mount Hermon, lit. the mountain of the local god of Hermon, perhaps the same deity who gave his name to Baal-gad, the later Paneas (see Josh. xi. 17). *entering in*] or frontier.

*Hamath*] afterwards Epiphaneia, the mod. Hama, on the Orontes, seat of a Canaanite kingdom which became tributary to Israel in David's time (2 Sam. viii. 9, 10). The frontier of Hamath is commonly spoken of as the northern limit of the land of Israel (Nu. xiii. 21; 1 K. viii. 65; cp. Am. vi. 2). Compare below, xviii. 28, note. **5.**

R.V. punctuates **the Canaanites; the Hittite, and the Amorite, &c.**, the five nations enumerated being regarded as branches of the Canaanites. Comp. Gen. x. 15, 16, where no fewer than eleven "sons," *i.e.* branches, of Canaan, are enumerated. Of these, five are Phœnician trading communities—Zidon, Arca, Sin, Aradus, Simyra—which never became subject to Israel. The Hamathites also (see above) retained their independence, except in the time of David, till they became subjects of the Assyrian Empire. Of the widespread Hittites (see i. 26, note) we know from other sources than the Bible that they touched the Euphrates at Carehemish. The four other Canaanite names in the classical passage in Genesis are those of the Jebusites (see i. 21, note, and below), the Amorites (see below), the Hivites (see above, ver. 3) and the Gîrgashites, of whom nothing definite is known, except that they must have been completely obliterated at an early date. The Perizzites (see i. 4) are not mentioned in Gen. x. 15, 16.

*Amorites*] an ancient synonym for Canaanites, commonly applied by Hebrew writers to the branches of the Canaanite stock on both sides of the Jordan that were completely conquered and had wholly disappeared. In the Tell el-Amarna tablets, older than the Exodus, Amurri appears to be the common name for Palestine. *Jebusites*] For the Jebusites of Jerusalem see i. 21. Northern Jebusites seem to be alluded to in Josh. xi. 3, but of these nothing is known. *took their daughters &c.*] Intermarriage with the Canaanites was a chief cause of the introduction of new and foreign elements into the religion of Jehovah. The tendency to such intermarriages was not finally put down till the time of Nehemiah, and though the practice is here by implication condemned (cp. Josh. xxiii. 12) the earlier history shows

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, 7  
 and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the  
 groves. Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against 8  
 Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim  
 king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served  
 Chushan-rishathaim eight years. And when the children of 9  
 Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to  
 the children of Israel, who delivered them, *even* Othniel the  
 son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the spirit of the 10  
 LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to  
 war: and the LORD delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of  
 Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against  
 Chushan-rishathaim. And the land had rest forty years. 11  
 And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

that unions of this kind were entered into by many excellent persons.

PART II. *Sect. ii.* CHAP. III. 7—XVI. 31. *The Twelve Judges.*

**7—11.** *Othniel, the first of the Judges.*

This narrative exemplifies from point to point the general remarks in ii. 11—19, with which passage it should be carefully compared; it is largely from the hand of the editor; see *Introd.* p. 8, footnote.

**7.** *the groves*] R.V. **the Asheroth**, pl. of Asherah. In the worship of the local sanctuaries of Canaan (which it was the achievement of the prophets, first to restrain and afterwards to repress), every altar had an *asherah* beside it. The meaning of this word has been much disputed; but from Dt. xvi. 21 ("thou shalt not plant an asherah of any kind of wood [or, 'an asherah, any kind of tree'] beside the altar of Jehovah") we see that it must have been either a living tree or a tree-like post; probably either form was at first admissible. It is not properly the name of a goddess, like Ashtoreth (Astarte); see ii. 13.

**8.** *Chushan-rishathaim*] R.V. **Cushan-rishathaim**. Of this king nothing further is known, either from the Bible or the monuments, and the narrative here is singularly lacking in detail. Mesopotamia is the country between the Euphrates and the Tigris, north of the alluvial plain of Babylonia. The Hebrew expression is Aram-naharaim, *i.e.* "Syria of the two rivers." Perhaps it does not include all Mesopotamia, but only the district between the rivers Euphrates and Chabôrâs, the country of Laban and Bethuel. The recently discovered tablets of Tell el-Amarna show that there were frequent political relations between Mesopotamia and Canaan, even at a date much earlier than this.

**9.** *deliverer*] R.V. **saviour**; cp. ver. 10 and see above, ii. 16, note. *Othniel*]

See i. 13, note. **10.** *the spirit of the Lord*] Not the spirit of prophecy, but the spirit of heroism ("counsel and might:" Isa. xi. 2), which in the Old Testament view is not man's own, but proceeds from God.



12 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees. So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh. And he brought the present unto Eglon

**12—30.** *Ehud, the second of the Judges.*

**12.** *Eglon*] The Moabites had kings long before the Israelites. At the time of the Israelite conquest the country north of the Arnon, which was once theirs but had been taken from them by the Amorites, was assigned to Reuben and Gad; but the Moabites did not relinquish their earlier claim and soon pressed northwards again. For centuries they were in almost uninterrupted possession of most of this territory. Here we find them, with the help of their allies, extending their conquests into Western Palestine, over the territory of Benjamin at least, their western stronghold being Jericho.

**13.** *Ammon*] Moab's closely related neighbour on the N.E. *Amalek*] one of the nomadic peoples on the border of Judah. The Israelites regarded Amalek as a very ancient nation (Nu. xxiv. 20), indeed as aboriginal (1 Sam. xxvii. 8), and as their hereditary enemy (Ex. xvii. 14). Nothing is known of its origin, for the Edomite Amalekites (Gen. xxxvi. 12, 16) can only be a detached branch of the nation which had joined itself to the children of Esau.

*city of palm trees*] i.e. Jericho (i. 16). Contrast Josh. vi. 26.

**15.** *deliverer*] R.V. **saviour**; see ver. 9. Ehud is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. Gera was one of the ten "sons," or clans, of the tribe of Benjamin, according to Gen. xlv. 21; in 1 Chr. viii. 3—5, Gera is "son" of Bela the son of Benjamin.

*left-handed*] Lefthandedness was a speciality of the Benjamites; cp. xx. 16.

*a present*] Heb. *minḥah*, a word specially used (a) of gifts of homage or tribute presented to sovereigns; (b) of offerings of sacred homage presented at the altar. As the Israelite did homage to his God of the fruits of the earth, which he owed to the Divine blessing (Dt. xxvi. 1 sqq.), *minḥah* came to be the technical name for a cereal oblation (A.V. "meat offering.") Ver. 18 shows that Ehud's *minḥah* was of some bulk, and was probably paid in kind. The place to which it was brought is not mentioned; there is no reason for assuming that it was Jericho.

**16.** *dagger*] Heb. *ḥereb*, the usual word for the short Hebrew sword, and so it is translated in R.V. *cubit*] Heb. *gômed*. The word occurs only here, and interpreters differ as to its meaning. LXX. takes it to be a span or half a

king of Moab: and Eglon *was* a very fat man. And when 18  
 he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the  
 people that bare the present. But he himself turned again 19  
 from the quarries that *were* by Gilgal, and said, I have a  
 secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence.  
 And all that stood by him went out from him. And Ehud 20  
 came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour,  
 which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a  
 message from God unto thee. And he arose out of *his* seat.  
 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from 21  
 his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: and the haft also 22  
 went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so  
 that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the  
 dirt came out. Then Ehud went forth through the porch, 23  
 and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked *them*.  
 When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they 24  
 saw that behold, the doors of the parlour *were* locked, they  
 said, Surely he covereth his feet in *his* summer chamber.  
 And they tarried till *they* were ashamed: and behold, he 25

cubit; the other ancient versions render as in A.V. 18. *sent away*] so as to secure their safety in case his desperate enterprise should fail.

19. *quarries*] R.V. marg. "graven images," or stone idols.

*Gilgal*] See ii. 1, note. Here, near one of the important fords of the Jordan, we know there were memorial stones (Josh. iv. 20); and we have reason to believe that the place had been an ancient seat of Canaanite worship. Some interpreters however think that here we ought to understand not the Gilgal of Josh. iv. 19, but that of Josh. xv. 7: "the Gilgal [*i.e.* stone circle or menhir], which is opposite the ascent of Adummim"—the sharp rise near the middle of the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, in the wild country where the parable of the Good Samaritan is localised. This view we must necessarily take if we assume Jericho as the scene of Eglon's assassination; for of course Ehud's retreat must have been westward.

*that stood by*] his personal attendants, not the court, for we learn from next verse that he was in his private chamber.

20. *summer parlour*] R.V. marg. "upper chamber of cooling." Light airy cabins on the house-roof, for use by the inmates in summer, are still to be seen in some parts of Syria.

*his seat*] Heb. "the chair" or throne; cp. note on v. 10.

22. *fat*] Heb. *heleb*; more exactly, the midriff, or the fat of the midriff.

*so that he could not, &c.*] Heb. "For he did not draw forth the sword out of his belly; and he [Ehud] went out into the *parshedôn*" (see next note).

23. *through the porch*] Heb. "went out into the *misderôn*." The last clause of ver. 22 and the first of ver. 23 say the same thing, and it would seem either that *parshedôn* was meant to be explanatory of *misderôn* or vice versâ. To us unfortunately both words are equally obscure, but from the context they probably mean something like "porch." 24. When

- opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened *them*: and behold, their lord *was* fallen down  
 26 dead on the earth. And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.  
 27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before  
 28 them. And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over.  
 29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.  
 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.  
 31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew

Ehud was gone out, Eglon's servants came. 25. *a key*] R.V.

**the key.** "Every door is furnished with a wooden lock...A number of small iron pins (four, five, or more) drop into corresponding holes in the sliding bolt, as soon as the latter is pushed into the hole or staple of the door-post. The key also has small pins, made to correspond with the holes, into which they are introduced to open the lock: the former pins being thus pushed up, the bolt may be drawn back. The wooden lock of a street-door is commonly about fourteen inches long; those of the doors of apartments, cupboards, &c., are about seven or eight or nine inches" (Lane, *Mod. Egyptians*).

26. *passed beyond*] This perhaps might be translated "crossed [the river] at"; so also in Gen. xxxii. 31 [Heb. 32]: "crossed [the river] at Peniel." *the quarries*] see ver. 19. *Seirath*] rather "the Seirah." Unknown. The

name indicates "rough" or "shaggy" country, and would apply to almost any part of the eastern slope of Benjamin or even of Ephraim. From iv. 5 we see that the expression "hill-country of Ephraim" can include the territory of Benjamin. Perhaps the word Seirah is not a proper name at all, and ought to be translated simply "the bush," "the jungle." Cp. Josh. xv. 10. 27.

*mountain...mount*] R.V. **hill-country.** *went down*] See i.

1; ii. 1. 28. *toward Moab*] R.V. **against the Moabites**; obviously, at any rate, so as to prevent the return to Moab of those Moabites who held Jericho and other parts of Western Palestine.

29. *all lusty, and all, &c.*] R.V. **every lusty man and every man of valour.** It was a complete extermination of the Moabite garrison. 30. *was subdued*] so far, that is, as its occupation of Western Palestine was concerned.

31. *Shamgar, the third of the Judges.*

*after him*] i.e. after Ehud. Some such clause as: "and Ehud the son of Gera died" (cp. ver. 11) has fallen out, and can still be traced in LXX. Ver. 31 appears to be an insertion and disturbs

of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad : and he also delivered Israel.

And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the <sup>4</sup> LORD, when Ehud was dead. And the LORD sold them into <sup>2</sup> the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor ; the captain of whose host *was* Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth

the context ; iv. 1 was originally consecutive with iii. 30. In some copies of LXX. Enegar or Samegar, *i.e.* Shamgar, is placed after Samson in xvi. 31.

*Shamgar*, the son of Anath, is named in v. 6, but in such a way as suggests that he lived in the days of the Midianite, not of the Philistine oppression. It is usually supposed by critics that he was introduced here by the second redactor to make up the number of twelve judges, after it had come to be felt that Abimelech was not justly entitled to be reckoned to their number. Shamgar is perhaps a Hittite name ; it occurs as Sangar in the Assyrian inscriptions as having been borne by princes of the Hittite kingdoms on the upper Euphrates. Shamgar is not here expressly called a judge, but only a "deliverer" or "saviour." of the *Philistines*] *lit.* "he smote the Philistines, six hundred men." *ox goad*] taken by some interpreters, surely by an excess of refinement, as a merely symbolical expression to denote that he led untrained peasants against the practised warriors of Philistia.

IV. 1—V. 31. *Deborah, the fourth of the Judges ; her song.*

1. *when Ehud was dead*] See iii. 31. 2. *Jabin*] Jabin king of Hazor is mentioned in Josh. xi. as having headed a powerful confederation of the kings of Northern Canaan against the Israelites under Joshua. He was defeated and slain and his power utterly broken at Hazor. The Jabin here mentioned is spoken of as "king of Canaan" (vv. 2, 23, 24) who also ruled at Hazor ; but it is not to be inferred from this that he was the sole Canaanite king in the country. All the evidence we possess goes to show that the Canaanite population continued long after the conquest to be divided into a large number of petty states, every considerable city indeed having an independent ruler or "king." *Hazor* lay near the waters of Merom and there is some probability in the suggested identification with Tell Kneibeh (1680 feet above sea-level), 2½ m. S. from Kedesh. The word Hazor probably means, primarily, "a sheepfold," an enclosure of thorny branches, or of stone. This Hazor is mentioned as having been burnt by Joshua (Josh. xi. 11). It was fortified by Solomon, and its inhabitants were carried captive by Tiglath-Pileser (2 K. xv. 29). *Sisera*]

See note on v. 20. *Harosheth* of the Gentiles [or 'nations,'] where Sisera "dwelt" and no doubt exercised the authority of a "king," has been somewhat doubtfully identified with the mod. Tell Harothieh, "an enormous double mound...situated just below the point where the Kishon in one of its turns beats against the rocky base of Carmel, leaving no room even for a footpath. A castle there effectually commands the pass up the vale of the Kishon into



3 of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the  
 LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty  
 4 years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel. And  
 Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel  
 5 at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah  
 between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the  
 6 children of Israel came up to her for judgment. And she sent  
 and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali,

Esdraelon...The immense double tell is still covered with the remains of old walls and buildings" (Thomson). The site thus described lay in territory that the Israelites had never been able to subdue (see above, i. 27). With the expression Harosheth of the Gentiles, or nations, compare "the nations of Gilgal" or "Goiim in Gilgal" of Josh. xii. 23. Gilgal in this expression seems but a form of the word Galilee; cp. "Galilee (*Gelil*) of the nations" in Isa. ix. 1. 3. *chariots of iron*] See i. 19, note. 4.

'Deborah (i.e. "bee") was the name also of Rebekah's nurse, who was buried below Bethel under the "oak of weeping." The phraseology of v. 15 seems to suggest that Deborah the prophetess belonged to the tribe of Issachar. *Lapidoth*] or rather Lappidoth: cp. *lappidim*, "lightnings;" Ex. xx. 18. *judged*] As a prophetess she made Israel to "know the statutes of God and His laws" (see Ex. xviii. 16). In this instance the magisterial or judicial implications of the word are more prominent than those indicated in ii. 16. 5. *dwelt*] R.V. *sat*. *palm tree*] Similarly Saul holds his court at Gibeah under a tree (1 Sam. xxii. 6). Judges and seers, as was natural, usually had their seats at places of public resort such as sanctuaries and asylums; and these, again, usually were associated with sacred trees (cp. iii. 7, note). In Palestine the sacred tree was most commonly an oak or terebinth; cp. the memorial oak of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, below Bethel (Gen. xxxv. 8), and the "oak of Tabor" (1 Sam. x. 3, R.V.). The date palm, however, also flourishes well in Palestine, not only in the sub-tropical climate of the Jordan valley, where its fruit comes to full maturity, but also in the more elevated parts of the country (see Neh. viii. 15; cp. Baal-tamar, near Gibeah, below, xx. 33).

*Ramah*, mod. er-Râm, 2,600 feet above sea-level, 5 m. N. from Jerusalem, the birth-place of Samuel (1 Sam. i. 1), afterwards known as Ramathaim (1 Macc. xi. 34), in Greek Arimathaea (Mk. xv. 43; Joh. xix. 38). It was a Benjamite town (Josh. xviii. 25; cp. below, xix. 13). *Bethel* (see i. 23, note), 5 m. N. from Ramah, was also Benjamite (Josh. xviii. 25). Both Ramah and Bethel are here reckoned to the "hill-country of Ephraim;" cp. iii. 26. 6. *Barak*] lit. "lightning." The word occurs as a proper name also in Palmyrene and South Arabian inscriptions. Compare the well-known Carthaginian surname Barcas. *Abinoam*] lit. "father of graciousness;" cp. Naomi and Naaman. *Kedesh-naphtali*, also known as Kedesh in Galilee, the mod. Kedes, 1,587 feet above sea-level, about 3 m. to the west of the marshy tract at the north end of the waters of Merom and 2½ m. N. of Tell



and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, *saying*, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee to 7 the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with 8 me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I

Khureibeh (Hazor?). The name implies that it was a sanctuary and so a suitable rendezvous; for the ancient Hebrews always opened a campaign with sacrifice, which in Hebrew idiom is called "consecrating the war." The close proximity of Kedesh to Hazor reminds of Altdorf and Zwing Uri in the legend of Tell. *the Lord God of Israel*] lit. "Jehovah, God of Israel." She appeals to his national religion. *draw toward*] rather, "occupy." *Mount Tabor*] on the borders of Issachar and Zebulun, an isolated hill, 1,843 feet above sea-level, near the north-eastern extremity of the valley of Jezreel, from which it is shut off by Little Hermon (see vii. 1, note). *ten thousand men*] In v. 8, the entire levy of Israel is estimated at 40,000 men; whence we may infer that Barak could command the full force of the northern tribes. *Naphtali...Zebulun*] Kedesh, the city of Barak, was in the territory of Naphtali; that of Zebulun adjoined Naphtali on the south and south-west. In the song of Deborah and Barak (see below), several other tribes are represented as taking part in this war of liberation. 7. *I will draw...I will deliver*] It is Jehovah who speaks through His prophetess. *river*] Heb. *nahal*, usually rendered "brook" or torrent (Job vi. 15). *Kishon*] i.e. "crooked" or "meandering;" the stream (mod. Mukatta') which drains the Esdraelon basin and falls into the Bay of Acre near Haifa. It can hardly be called perennial, except for the last two or three miles of its course, after it has received the waters of the fountains of the Sa'adiyeh, which flow from the base of Mount Carmel within three miles from Haifa. But during winter and spring and after sudden storms of rain it often has a considerable volume of water. In its upper part it has two main branches which unite at a point about half-way between Lejjûn (Megiddo) and Iksâl (Chisloth-tabor). The larger of these rises at Jenin and is fed by a series of springs along the base of the mountains of Manasseh, especially near Lejjûn (Megiddo), while the other (mod. W. el Muwêli), usually regarded as the more important, comes down from the hills to the west of Chisloth-tabor (the watershed here is represented by a line from Chisloth-tabor to Endor). It does not appear whether either of these bore the name of Kishon in ancient times; the modern name Mukatta' seems to apply only to the united stream. In the Old Testament the Kishon is not mentioned except in connection with the present occurrence (ver. 13, v. 21; Ps. lxxxiii. 9) and with Elijah's slaughter of the prophets of Baal (1 K. xviii. 40). 8. LXX. adds: "for I know not the day in which the Lord will send his angel with me with good

- 9 will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to  
 10 Kedesh. And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and  
 11 Deborah went up with him. Now Heber the Kenite, *which was* of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto  
 12 the plain of Zaanaim, *which is* by Kedesh. And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount  
 13 Tabor. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, *even* nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that *were* with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of  
 14 Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down  
 15 from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all *his* chariots, and all *his* host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera

success"; cp. ver. 14. 9. *not be for thine honour*] or, "the glory of the expedition shall not be thine." 10. *called*] The Hebrew form used is specially applied to the calling out of the national militia. *Zebulun and Naphtali*] cp. ver. 6, note. *went*

*up*] to Mount Tabor, a naturally strong post, commanding the upper valley of the Kishon. It is known to have been fortified in the time of Antiochus the Great, and also during the Jewish wars of the first century, and the Crusades. 11. *Now Heber, &c.*] Heb. "Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from Kain [*i.e.* the Kenites], to wit from the sons of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses." From Nu. x. 29, compared with Ex. ii. 18, we should rather conclude that Hobab, the eponym of this branch of the Kenites, was Moses's brother-in-law; but the "sons of Hobab" are here spoken of as a clan, in which connection it is obviously unimportant whether they be called the children of Moses's father-in-law, or of his brother-in-law. We have already seen (i. 13) that in ethnological lists names of relationship are used somewhat vaguely.

*unto the plain, &c.*] Heb. "As far as the oak in Zaanannim." That is, in the course of their wanderings this family of the Kenites (who were, by birth and habit, nomads) had come, pitching their tents now here, now there, as far north as to the neighbourhood of Kedesh-naphtali, at a well-known oak or terebinth which stood in Zaanannim. For Zaanannim (Josh. xix. 33) the text here has Zaanaim, but the longer and probably more correct form of the name is given in the margin. 13. *unto the river of Kishon*] Barak (ver. 14) marched down from Tabor to dispute the passage of the river; cp. v. 19 sqq.

15. *so that Sisera, &c.*] R.V. **and Sisera, &c.** Presumably Barak had manœuvred so as to

lighted down off *his* chariot, and fled away on his feet. But <sup>16</sup> Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; *and* there was not a man left. Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the <sup>17</sup> wife of Heber the Kenite: for *there was* peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And <sup>18</sup> Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. And <sup>19</sup> he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. Again he said unto <sup>20</sup> her, Stand *in* the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael Heber's wife <sup>21</sup> took a nail of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened *it* into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, <sup>22</sup> Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I

bring the hostile chariots into ground where they could not move freely. On foot Sisera was less conspicuous and could strike into some path off the main line of pursuit. In what direction he fled is uncertain, for we are not told where Heber's tent at this time stood.

**16.** *unto Harosheth*] *i.e.* down the valley of the Kishon.

**17.** *the tent of Jael*] Many centuries later, among the northern Arabs, the tent belonged to the wife and not to the husband.

*peace*] No blood-feud such as might subsist even between a great king and the most insignificant nomad sept. That Jael, as the sequel shows, did not consider this "peace" as binding on her, is consistent with what we know otherwise of the independence of the wife in early nomadic society. From ch. v. 6 we may conclude that, on the contrary, her father's house was at feud with Sisera.

**18.** *mantle*] rug, blanket, or coverlet; Heb. *semicah* (here only).

**19.** *a bottle of milk*] Heb. "the skin of milk," which stood in every nomad tent, and was both meat and drink to the inmates. In the East wine, water, oil, milk, and the like, are usually (and especially among nomads) carried in skins that have been tanned whole. The legs are sewn up, and the neck tightly closed with a cord. In Ps. cxix. 83, Mt. ix. 17, &c., the reference, as here, is to a vessel of this description, and not to "the bottle of potters" (Isa. xxx. 14, marg.).

**21.** *a nail of the tent*] Heb. "the tent peg," *i.e.* one of the pegs used for fixing the tent ropes.

*a hammer*] Heb. "the hammer," viz., the wooden mallet used for driving the tent pegs into the ground.

*for he was fast asleep, &c.*] R.V. **for he was in a deep sleep; so he swooned and died.**

**22.** *as Barak pursued*] Heb. "and so



will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her *tent*, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail *was* in his temples. So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

5 Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

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Barak came up in pursuit of Sisera.” 24. *prospered, and prevailed*] more exactly, “continued to be hard [heavy] upon Jabin,” *i.e.* after the defeat of Sisera the power of the northern Canaanites continued to decline until they were entirely reduced before Israel.

Ch. V. *The song of Deborah and Barak* (or rather, of Deborah; see ver. 1).

This remarkable poem, which, it is evident, must have been composed under the immediate influence of the events to which it relates, constitutes the oldest part of the Book of Judges. In places its meaning is doubtful, or obscure, partly owing to the somewhat imperfect state of the text; but we have no difficulty in understanding it sufficiently to be able to appreciate its great lyric and dramatic qualities—its impetuous rapidity, its vivid and picturesque suggestiveness, the brevity and compression, yet completeness, with which it develops its theme. Apart from its literary distinction, it has a high historical value from the light it incidentally throws on the social condition of Israel at the time of its composition. As regards its authorship there seems to be no conclusive reason for rejecting the very ancient tradition according to which it was composed by Deborah, even though we should fail to detect the peculiarly feminine traits that have been seen by some in the allusions to Jael, Sisera’s mother, and the like, and even though we should be constrained to admit that probably Deborah nowhere speaks in it in the first person as the composer (see notes on vv. 3, 7, 12). In its mechanical structure the main feature to be observed is the parallelism which it shows in common with all Hebrew poetry, and more particularly the progressive parallelism which is seen in such clauses as:

From heaven fought the stars;

From their courses fought [they] with Sisera;

or:

Through the window she looked forth and cried;

The mother of Sisera through the lattice.

The elaborate schemes of strophe and antistrophe, and the exact subdivisions of the song as a whole into accurately balanced mutually corresponding verses which have been suggested (but with no sort of agreement) by various critics are probably imaginary.

1. This verse is of course not an integral part of the original song, but is due to the editor. The poem itself he had probably found in one or other of those ancient collections of poetry which



Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, 2  
 When the people willingly offered themselves.  
 Hear, O ye kings ; give ear, O ye princes ; 3  
 I, *even* I, will sing unto the LORD ;  
 I will sing *praise* to the LORD God of Israel.  
 LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, 4  
 When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,

are cited in the Old Testament under such titles as "the Book of Jashar," "the Book of the Wars of Jehovah." *sang*] 3rd

sing. fem. not 3rd. pl. Deborah, not Barak, is the chief singer.

2. *for the avenging of Israel*] This vague and paraphrastic rendering is due to the Targum. The words literally mean "for that flowing locks (*perâ'ûth*) were worn in Israel"; and the leading word is the same as in Nu. vi. 5 where it is said of the Nazarite that "he shall not let the locks (*pera'*) of his head grow long," and in Ezek. xlv. 20 where the priests are forbidden to "suffer their locks (*pera'*) to grow long." The expression in all three cases refers to the ancient and wide-spread practice of vowing to keep the head unshorn until certain conditions had been fulfilled (cp. Acts xviii. 18). The priests were prohibited from making such vows because they might interfere with the regular discharge of the priestly functions; but with warriors in primitive times the unshorn head was a usual mark of their consecration to the work they had undertaken, and their locks remained untouched till they had achieved their enterprise or had perished in the attempt (cp. Ps. lxviii. 21). War amongst most primitive peoples is a sacred function, and this was specially the case in Israel where Jehovah was the God of Hosts. The clause before us, then, is most probably to be interpreted in the light of the parallel expression: "when [or rather, "for that"] the people willingly offered themselves," and the entire verse to be taken as an expression of thanks to Jehovah that the people had been inspired with patriotic and martial zeal. The R.V. rendering ("for that the leaders took the lead in Israel") is supported by LXX.

(A) and assumes a secondary sense of the root *pera'* as implying the idea of prominence; cp. Dt. xxxii. 42, where the expression "from the hairy (*pera'*) head of the enemy" is rendered in A.V. "from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy," and in R.V. "from the head of the leaders of the enemy." 3. *kings...princes*] A challenge to all the non-Israelite world within hearing (cp. Ps. ii. 10). *I, even I*] It is Israel who speaks (as in Ex. xv.); Jehovah has proved his title to supremacy. *sing praise*] The word implies the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, and is equivalent to the Greek *ψάλλειν*, whence "psalm." *the LORD God of Israel*] Rather: "Jehovah, the God of Israel," who is addressed, not by a title but by his proper name.

4, 5. The coming of Jehovah for the deliverance of his people. The imagery is that of a thunderstorm, in which he is described as descending upon Sinai his earthly seat, and thence advancing northward by way of Seir or Edom to the field of battle. The later prophets thought of Zion as God's dwelling-place (Am. i. 2; Isa. ii. 3;

- The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped,  
The clouds also dropped water.
- 5 The mountains melted from before the Lord,  
Even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel.
- 6 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,  
In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,  
And the travellers walked *through* byways.
- 7 *The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel,*

Ezek. xliii. 7); but with the old Israelites it was Sinai that was "the mount of Jehovah" (Nu. x. 33), "the mountain of God" (Ex. iii. 1, iv. 27, xviii. 5), out of which his help came. This view still survives in such passages as Dt. xxxii. 2 and Hab. iii. 3, as well as here. *Seir...Edom*] The expressions are synonymous. Edom corresponds to "Teman" ('south'), the southern horizon of Palestine, in Hab. iii. 3. Behind it lay Sinai. *earth trembled &c.*] Cp. Ps. lxxviii. 8. 5. *melted*] or, as R.V., **flowed down** [with water]; so Vulg. (from root NZL); better, as LXX. and R.V. marg., *quaked* (from root ZLL). This interpretation is also to be preferred in Isa. lxiv. 1, 3.

6—8. These verses paint in a few vigorous strokes the helpless distress of Israel under the Canaanite oppression. The condition described is much the same as under the Philistine oppression in the days of Saul. The Hebrews are disarmed (ver. 8; cp. 1 Sam. xiii. 19—22) and helpless before the armed bands which plundered the villages and highways, destroying all industry and traffic. The Canaanites, we see, had not established a regular sovereignty over Israel: for that they were too weak even in Deborah's days. While the general picture is intelligible and vivid, several details in these verses are obscure, and the text seems to have suffered some corruption.

6. The complete prostration of Israel here described presupposes a long struggle in which, it would seem, Shamgar and Jael had played a leading part against the Canaanites. In iii. 31 an exploit of Shamgar against the Philistines is recorded; and we may suppose that the Philistines at this period were subordinate allies of the Canaanites. The mention of Jael is very interesting; for it appears to show that there was an ancient feud between Jael and Sisera, and that the heroine had already won distinction by her patriotism.

*the highways were unoccupied*] Perhaps rather "the caravans [or 'travelling companies'; Isa. xxi. 13] ceased" (pts). The Canaanites commanded and pillaged the main roads and all traffic was forced into by-paths. 7. *The inhabitants of the villages*] The Hebrew word *perázôn*, which occurs again in ver. 11 but nowhere else in the Old Testament, and has puzzled all interpreters ancient and modern, is taken by A.V. to be a collective noun, "villages," "villagers," akin to the name Perizzites (see i. 4). This suits well here, but not in ver. 11, where the Hebrew will not bear the sense "towards the inhabitants" &c. R.V. takes the word to be properly an abstract noun, "rule," passing here into the concrete sense "rulers," a very precarious rendering. Perhaps A.V. is

Until that I Deborah arose,  
That I arose a mother in Israel.

They chose new gods;

8

Then *was* war in the gates:

Was there a shield or spear seen

Among forty thousand in Israel?

My heart *is* toward the governors of Israel,

9

That offered themselves willingly among the people.

Bless ye the LORD.

Speak, ye that ride on white asses,

10

Ye that sit in judgment,

substantially right here, but in that case the text of ver. 11 is corrupt.

*I Deborah arose*] Perhaps the verb is really an archaic form of the 2nd pers. fem. "thou Deborah didst arise." Elsewhere in the song Deborah is spoken of in the 2nd or 3rd person.

8. *They chose &c.*] The Hebrew of this and the following clause does not yield any good sense. Professor Robertson Smith suggests an emendation which would give the rendering: "The joyful noise of the new moons ceased; the defenders of the gates were no more."

*spear*] or lance (*romah*), a word which in the older Hebrew literature occurs only in poetry, but in the later books takes the place of *hanith* ("spear") in prose also. The full equipment of the warrior is sword (*hereb*; iii. 21), spear (*romah* or *hanith*), and shield; see 1 Sam. xiii. 22; Isa. ii. 4 &c. It is probable that the bulk of Barak's troops were armed chiefly with short swords, bows, slings, or even ruder and more primitive weapons. *forty thousand*] This figure, mentioned, it is clear, as representing the entire fighting strength of the nation, is quite in harmony with 2 Sam. vi. 1, where the whole levy of Israel in the time of David is put at 30,000 men, but accords hardly so well with Ex. xii. 37, 38; Nu. i. 45—47, or xx. 2 below, where the figures respectively are 600,000, 603,550 (exclusive of Levites) and 400,000 (exclusive of Benjamin and probably also of Levi).

9—11. A tribute of admiration and gratitude to the brave volunteers who by their appeal to arms had won back the freedom of their country.

9. Cp. ver. 2. 10. *Speak*] *i.e.* of the revival of patriotism and martial courage in Israel. The three classes here addressed are representative of all sorts and conditions of people in the community—the patrician and plebeian orders, so to speak. *white*] The colour meant seems to be not pure white but a light dust colour with a tinge of red. In the cities of the Arabian East "the ass is a riding beast for grave and considerable persons" (Doughty, II. 482) and white asses are most highly esteemed. In Aleppo the white donkey "is reserved for Pashas, Imams and the richest of rich merchants" (Blunt, *Bed. Tribes* I. 209).

*in judgment*] This rendering follows an ancient tradition, but departs from the Hebrew. Nor is R.V. "on rich carpets" supported by satisfactory proof. "on garments" would be a more defensible rendering, and gives a

And walk by the way.

- 11 *They that are delivered* from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water,  
There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD,  
*Even the righteous acts towards the inhabitants* of his villages in Israel:  
Then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.
- 12 Awake, awake, Deborah:  
Awake, awake, utter a song:  
Arise, Barak,  
And lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.

tolerable sense; for in the East well-to-do people have more clothes than they need for wear, and so can sit on part of their wardrobe; cp. 2 K. ix. 13, for the use of mantles to sit on. 11. *They that are delivered &c.*] The general sense aimed at by this free paraphrase is given with closer adherence to the Heb. by R.V. **Far from the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water,** i.e. "far from scenes of battle and bloodshed, in the morning and evening talk by the peaceful village fountains, shall the heroic deeds of the brave patriots continue to be mentioned and praised." But the rendering "archers" is not certain. Some would render, connecting the words with the preceding verse: "speak [God's praises] for the noise [glad shouts] of them that divide the prey in the places &c." *rehearse*] Celebrate, or praise; a somewhat rare word, used also in xi. 40. *righteous acts of the Lord*] Cp. 1 Sam. xii. 7; Mic. vi. 5. The righteous acts of Jehovah are the victories by which he shews his loyalty to his covenant with Israel. *towards the inhabitants &c.*] R.V. **of his rule in Israel.** This is perhaps best, if the text is sound; see note on ver. 7. The present text is as old as LXX. but a very slight change in the letters as written at that time would give the sense "in the redemption of Israel." *shall the people of the Lord*] or, "the people of Jehovah went down." *to the gates*] i.e. to the outposts or frontier cities of the land held by the Hebrews. This clause anticipates in brief what is said in detail in vv. 12—18.

12—18. The mustering of the tribes. Among the tribes summoned response was made by Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir (Manasseh), Zebulun, and Issachar; while Reuben, Gilead (Gad), Dan and Asher kept aloof. Judah and Simeon are not named at all; these two tribes were quite apart from the others, as indeed they continued to be down to the time of David.

12. This verse, or at least the first clause, is usually taken as parenthetic, and the expression understood as used by the prophetess to stimulate her own lyric ardour in the middle of her song. But the words are more probably a summons to the fight, and are here dramatically introduced to indicate the share Deborah had at the time in rousing the fighting ardour of the people by her prophetic songs. For the musical accompaniments of ancient prophecy, compare 1 Sam. x. 5. *lead thy captivity captive*] or rather, with a



Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the 13  
nobles *among* the people :

The LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.

Out of Ephraim *was there* a root of them against Amalek ; 14

After thee, Benjamin, among thy people ;

Out of Machir came down governors,

And out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.

And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah ; 15

slight change in the Hebrew vowels: "lead captive thy captors" (cp. Isa. xiv. 2). Apart from the hardship and humiliation he shared with the whole nation, Barak probably had some special personal grievance to avenge. (Compare the case of Gideon, below, viii. 18.)

The meaning of the expression on the E.V. rendering is, of course, "take thy prisoners" ["captivity" being equivalent to "captives"].

13. *Then he made* &c.] Better, as in R.V., neglecting the traditional pointing: "Then came down a remnant of the nobles [and of] the people. Jehovah came down for me against the mighty." Some scholars also propose to change the traditional accentuation, and so avoid the difficult ellipsis "of the nobles [and of] the people," rendering thus: "Then came down a remnant of the nobles; the people of Jehovah came down" &c.—For this use of the word "came down" see i. 9.

14. (was there) *a root of them against Amalek*], or rather, as R.V. [came down] **they whose root is in Amalek**. An obscure expression: possibly the text is in some disorder. We have no direct evidence of any connection between Ephraim and Amalek; but perhaps the verse may be taken along with xii. 15 as shewing that the hill-country of Ephraim had once wholly or partially belonged to Amalek.

*After thee*] i.e. after Ephraim [came] Benjamin.

*among thy people*] lit. "among thy peoples," i.e. "clans." Apparently Benjamin, the younger brother of Joseph, served under the banner of Ephraim. *Machir*] the first-born of Manasseh (Gen. i. 23; Josh. xvii. 1). According to Josh. xvii. 1, Machir and his descendants received (northern) Gilead and Bashan; but in Nu. xxvi. 29 sqq. Abiezer, Helek, Azriel, Shechem, Hepher (afterwards represented by the five daughters of Zelophehad) and Shemida are all descendants of Machir, and these, according to Josh. xvii. 5, 6, had ten lots in Western Palestine. There can be no doubt that by Machir here Western Manasseh is meant. It would seem indeed as if Machir did not actually begin to occupy its territory to the east of Jordan until the time of Jair (x. 4).

*governors*] i.e. military leaders, each of course with his own contingent of followers.

*Zebulun*] See i. 30.

*the pen of the writer*] So Targ. and Syr. But all modern interpreters agree in rendering: "the marshal's staff." The word denoting a writer or scribe (*sôpher*) also denotes a kind of military officer, as in 2 K. xxv. 19, Jer. lii. 25, where we read of "the principal scribe of the host," or, rather, of the "scribe, the captain of the host," who mustered the people.

15. This verse is full of difficulty. In the first clause A.V. gives a good sense, but departs from the Heb., which has the strange expression "my

- Even Issachar, *and* also Barak :  
 He was sent on foot into the valley.  
 For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great thoughts of heart.  
 16 Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds,  
 To hear the bleatings of the flocks ?  
 For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great searchings of heart.  
 17 Gilead abode beyond Jordan :  
 And why did Dan remain *in* ships ?  
 Asher continued on the sea shore,

princes in Issachar" (R.V. marg.). In the second clause neither A.V. nor R.V. ("as was Issachar so was Barak") is satisfactory, but nothing better can be got from the text as it stands. The last clause may bear the sense: "He was hurried [lit. 'flung'] into the valley by his feet"; *i.e.* he rushed headlong into the fray as if his feet carried him away; cp. Job xviii. 8. Or, since the distinction of sing. and plur. is not always marked in old Hebrew writing, we may render with R.V.: "Into the valley they rushed forth at his feet" (cp. iv. 10; viii. 5, Heb.; 2 Sam. xv. 16, Heb.). In either case the valley is the battlefield in the plain of Esdraelon. The last clause of the verse goes with what follows in vv. 16, 17, where the tribes that took no part in the conflict are taunted for their inactivity. *For the divisions of Reuben*]

Rather, as in R.V.; **By the water-courses of Reuben** (though some would render: "in the divisions," taking the word in its topographical sense as equivalent to shires or districts). The Reubenite territory was well supplied with water, and was "a place for cattle": see Nu. xxxii. 1; 2 K. iii. 4. *thoughts*] R.V. **resolves**, the same word which in Isa. x. 1 is rendered "decrees." Reuben's great resolves are here spoken of sarcastically. They came to nothing (see ver. 16); the "native hue of resolution" was "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." The whole clause is repeated in ver. 16 with a trifling change which gives "searchings of heart" (HQRX) for (HQQX). The same expression should doubtless stand in both clauses, or more probably the clause in ver. 16 was originally a various reading to our verse.

**16. abodest**] Translate: "satest." *bleatings of*] R.V. and all modern interpreters give **pipings for**. A pastoral idyll. *searchings of heart*] This is commonly taken of consultations ending in nothing. But, in Hebrew, "to search a man" is to sound him and see what is in his heart (1 Sam. xx. 12, marg.; Prov. xxviii. 11), and so we may here understand that there was much sounding of one another's courage but no man was found to make a brave resolve.

**17. Gilead**] Here used as equivalent to the Gadite territory.

*Dan*] The northern Dan is plainly meant. The allusion however to this tribe as "remaining [lit. 'sojourning'] in ships" is very obscure; for, like the men of Laish whom they dispossessed, the Danites were by the necessities of their situation remote from maritime pursuits whether as shipowners or as hired sailors. Perhaps the text is corrupt. *Asher continued*] or sat

And abode in his breaches.

Zebulun and Naphtali *were* a people *that* jeoparded their 18  
lives unto the death

In the high places of the field.

The kings came *and* fought,

Then fought the kings of Canaan

19

still, on the shore (or, at the haven) of the sea. *and abode in his breaches*] or, "by his creeks." The territory of Asher (Josh. xix. 24—31) extended from the neighbourhood of Mount Carmel northward to Tyre and Sidon. The principal harbours or inlets along this sea-board are Acco, Achzib, Tyre, Sarepta, Sidon, and none of these were held by Israelites (i. 31), so that Asher's command of the coast can have been but partial. **18.** *Naphtali*] See i. 33. *in the high places of the field*] The allusion is not to the field of battle, but simply to the territory held by these two tribes. Its highland character, differing from that of Issachar, gave them comparative immunity from Canaanite attack. All the more disinterested and praiseworthy was their conduct. R.V. gives the verse in its Hebrew order as follows: **Zebulun was a people...And Naphtali upon the high places** &c. The sense is: "Zebulun and Naphtali, upon the high places of the land, were a people that jeoparded," &c.

**19—23.** The battle, victory, and pursuit. The battle took place at "Taanach" (see i. 27), or, rather, at a point on the north side of the Kishon opposite Taanach, but more than 3 miles distant from it. The Israelites had come down from Mount Tabor, and we may suppose Sisera and his army to have advanced up the valley from the west to meet them. No details of the actual encounter are given, but it would seem as if bad weather had favoured the Israelites (cp. the battle of Beth-horon: Josh. x. 11), and, in particular, that violent rains had raised the rivulets and streams so as to make the Canaanite chariots unmanageable. A portion of the Canaanite army sought to gain Taanach or some other stronghold on the southern edge of the valley by struggling through the unusually swollen Kishon, and many perished in the attempt<sup>1</sup>. Others rushed in wild confusion straight westward along the plain, and the Israelites, having no cavalry, were not able to give effective pursuit. If the inhabitants of Meroz (which must have lain at a point from which by a prompt movement it might have been possible to cut off the fugitives: see below) had "come to the help of Jehovah" by intercepting the enemy's flight, the destruction of the Canaanites would have been much more complete.

<sup>1</sup> A similar disaster happened in the neighbourhood to numbers of the Turkish troops after their defeat by the French in the so-called "Battle of Mount Tabor" (16 April, 1799). "Kleber was posted at Fâleh [about 2 m. N.W. from Shunem: see Map], and with his corps of about 1500 men kept in check the whole Syrian army of at least 25,000 men. The French, formed in a square, fought from sunrise till noon, when Napoleon hastened to their aid with 600 men. The Turks, thinking that a large army was approaching, took to flight; many were killed, and others were drowned, there being an inundation at the time caused by the overflow of a small brook here." (Baedeker-Socin.)

- In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo;  
 They took no gain of money.  
 20 They fought from heaven;  
 The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.  
 21 The river of Kishon swept them away,  
*That ancient river, the river Kishon.*  
 O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.  
 22 Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the  
 pransings,  
 The pransings of their mighty *ones*.  
 23 Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord,  
 Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;  
 Because they came not to the help of the Lord,  
 To the help of the Lord against the mighty.

19. *waters of Megiddo*] *i.e.* the Kishon. In like manner the plain was called "the valley of Megiddo" (Zech. xii. 11; 2 Chr. xxxv. 22), after one of the principal strongholds by which it was commanded; see i. 27. *they took no gain in money*] Their expedition brought them no profit. A meiosis. 20. *They fought*] *i.e.* the stars. *in their courses*] lit. "from their paths"

(xx. 31, 32). It is not necessary to find here a hint of the belief, widely spread among the ancient Semites, and most highly developed among the Babylonians, that the stars were living sentient things. Among the ancients everywhere the changes of the season and of weather (which in Palestine follows the season much more steadily than with us) were marked by the movements of the stars. The sense therefore is that season and weather lent their aid to discomfit Sisera, viz., by swelling the streams. *Sisera*] The song of Deborah knows nothing of Jabin. To the singer, Sisera is the real head of the Canaanites; not merely a local kinglet but a chief over princes, for in ver. 29 his mother's attendants are "princesses" and in v. 30 (note) she herself is "the queen."

21. *Kishon*] see iv. 7. *ancient*] cp. Dt. xxxiii. 15: "ancient mountains." *O my soul &c.*] better, as R.V., **O my soul, march on with strength.** The cry with which the victor calls upon himself and his troops, though faint, still to pursue. Cp. ver. 12.

22. A fine onomatopoeic description of the galloping flight of the enemy's cavalry (*míddhāróth dāhāróth abbārau*. Translate: "then did the horsehoofs beat, as the strong ones galloped away.") 23. *Curse...curse bitterly*] contrast ver. 24. *Meroz*] Unknown. A site corresponding to that of the modern El-Mezra'a, between Shunem and Nazareth, would perhaps meet the conditions, but the names have nothing in common. *angel of the Lord*] The individual leader, thought of as going before the armies of Israel; see iv. 14, and cp. ii. 1. *the help of the Lord*] The cause was Jehovah's (see especially ver. 13), and the enemies of Israel are also his enemies (ver. 31). *against*] Some would render "among."



Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the 24  
 Kenite be,  
 Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.  
 He asked water, *and* she gave *him* milk; 25  
 She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.  
 She put her hand to the nail, 26  
 And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;  
 And with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his  
 head,  
 When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.  
 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down : 27  
 At her feet he bowed, he fell:  
 Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.  
 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, 28

**24—27.** The deed of Jael.

The defeated general, separated from his troops, arrives on foot, unattended, at Jael's door, and asks for water. She brings him a large bowl of milk instead, and as he stands and drinks strikes him dead with a hammer. The less accurate account of her deed in ch. iv. seems to have arisen from misunderstanding of the poem. The morality of the action has been greatly discussed, but too much by modern standards, and on the assumption that Sisera had a right to reckon on friendly treatment at Jael's hands. It is plain that her Israelite contemporaries, who knew all the circumstances, saw in her conduct nothing but what was perfectly regular and honourable. They gave her their hearty admiration and gratitude. (Cp. note on v. 6).

**24.** *Heber the Kenite*] See iv. 11. *among*] Heb. "above."  
*women in the tent*] nomad women. **25.** *He*] It is taken for  
 granted that every listener will know who is intended. *milk...*  
*butter*] not two distinct items: "butter" (*hemah*) can also mean  
 "sour milk." *lordly*] i.e. 'ample.' The great basin (same  
 word as in vi. 38) in which the milk stood to sour. **26.** *the*  
*nail*] lit. "the peg," i.e. the handle of the hammer: see the parallel  
 clause. Translate:

She put her hand to the peg,  
 And her right hand to the workman's hammer,  
 And with the hammer she hammered Sisera, she broke his head,  
 Yea, she crushed and pierced his temples.

**27.** *lay down*] lit. "lay." Render the verse:

At her feet he sank down, he fell, he lay:

At her feet he sank down, he fell;

Where he sank down, there he fell overcome.

**28—30.** Sisera's mother. She sits with sleepless anxiety at the palace window, waiting for the tidings of victory which he neither brings nor sends. Her princesses vainly reassure her as they picture a rich booty of embroidered garments and of slaves.

**28.** The order of the clauses is, as in R.V., **Through the window she looked forth, and cried; The mother of Sisera**

- And cried through the lattice,  
 Why is his chariot so long in coming?  
 Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
- 29 Her wise ladies answered *her*,  
 Yea, she returned answer to herself,
- 30 Have they not sped? have they *not* divided the prey;  
 To every man a damsel or two;  
 To Sisera a prey of divers colours,  
 A prey of divers colours of needlework,  
 Of divers colours of needlework on both sides,  
*Meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?*
- 31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD:  
 But let them that love him *be* as the sun when he goeth  
 forth in his might.
- And the land had rest forty years.
- 6 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD:

[cried] **through the lattice.** 29. *ladies*] or rather, "princesses." The expression implies the high rank of Sisera; see ver. 20, note.

*Yea*] The particle is adversative, and the clause ought probably to be rendered, as in R.V. marg.: "yet she repeateth her words unto herself," ver. 30 being supposed to be spoken, not by Sisera's mother in her deep anxiety, but by the princesses to reassure her.

30. *sped*] lit. "found." The form of the question implies that an affirmative answer is expected. The choicer spoils only are mentioned. The special present of the chief (cp. below, viii. 24) is to consist of pieces of richly dyed and embroidered apparel, obtained, we may conjecture, from Babylonia or Phoenicia. *a prey of divers colours*] or rather, "a spoil of dyed garments." Dor, a few miles off, on the other side of Carmel, was, it is to be remembered, a principal seat of the production of the costly murex dye. *divers colours of needlework*] dyed garments embroidered. *needlework on both sides*] embroidered on both sides. *for the necks &c.*] lit. "for the neck of the spoil."

Various explanations of this obscure expression have been offered. Perhaps it is best with Ewald to read *shegal* ("queen"; same word as in Ps. xlv. 9; Neh. ii. 6) instead of *shelal* ("spoil"). This reading, if adopted, further confirms what has been remarked above, on ver. 20.

#### VI. 1—VIII. 35. *Gideon, the fifth of the Judges.*

The story of Gideon as it now lies before us seems to have been drawn from at least two sources. The oldest of these is represented by the fragment (viii. 4—21) describing the pursuit of Zebah and Zalmunna. It presupposes the occasion of Gideon's pursuit to have been a raid of these Midianite princes upon the territory to the west of Jordan, in the course of which they had put to death certain brothers of Gideon (sons of his mother). In his pursuit he is accompanied by three hundred of his own clansmen (Abiezrites). He comes up with the Midianites on the fringe of the Syrian desert,

and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: *and* <sup>2</sup> because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves, and strong

avenges his brethren by putting the two princes to death, and receives as his portion of the spoil the earrings taken from the enemy. A fuller account of Gideon is contained in vi. 2—viii. 3. It tells how Gideon was divinely called to deliver Israel from the Midianite scourge, how approaching from the heights of Manasseh he surprised the camp of the enemy in the plain and put them to flight, and how the Ephraimites being afterwards summoned seized the fords of Jordan and captured and slew Oreb and Zeeb. But this fuller account is not itself all of one piece, having probably received occasional additions from the hand of the editor and perhaps other sources.

VI. 1—32. Gideon's preparation for his work.

1. *Midian*] From Gen. xxv. 2, 4, 6 we see that the Israelites regarded the Midianites as near relations,—as near as the Ishmaelites at least. Indeed in ch. viii. 24 they are actually called Ishmaelites. Their seat is vaguely indicated in Gen. xxv. 6 as being in “the east country,” by which we are to understand Northern Arabia and the Syro-arabian desert. They were nomads, and figure sometimes as plundering hordes, sometimes as carrying on a peaceful caravan-traffic by means of their camels in which their wealth chiefly consisted (Gen. xxxvii. 28, 36; Isa. lx. 6). In Ex. ii. and xviii. we meet with them in the neighbourhood of Sinai; the name Midian is still attached to a district on the Arabian shore of the Red Sea, south of the gulf of Akaba.

2. In all ages, when the government has been weak, Palestine has been exposed to the annual raids of Bedouins, who usually make no attempt to conquer or settle the country. Thomson, writing about the year 1856, says: “Their system of desolation is worked out after this fashion: They pitch their tents in the vicinity of a village, and in such numbers as to bid defiance to the inhabitants. Of course their camels and flocks roam over the unfenced plain and devour a large part of the grain while growing; and when it is ripe they either steal it or compel the farmers to *present* them a heavy per centage as the price of their *protection*. From the village itself chickens, eggs, sheep, cows and even horses disappear, and can never be recovered. Many of the inhabitants soon move off to escape from these annoyances, and, the village being thereby weakened, the Arabs provoke a quarrel; some one is wounded or killed, and then the place is sacked and burned. The end aimed at is now reached, and the land belongs henceforth to the lawless Ishmaelites.” The “dens” (ver. 2) which the Israelites “made them” are probably rock-hewn excavations such as are still used by the Syrian peasantry to conceal their grain from the tax-gatherer or enemy (Jer. xli. 8); the cattle would be driven into the “strongholds” or mountain fastnesses. Open villages are helpless against the Bedouin nomads,

- 3 holds. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, 4 even they came up against them; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, 5 nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered 6 into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried 7 unto the LORD. And it came to pass, when the children of 8 Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, that the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of 9 bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them 10 out from before you, and gave you their land; and I said unto you, I *am* the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.
- 11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the Abi-ezrite:

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but the simplest fortification checks them.

3. *and so it was, when &c.*] The Hebrew expresses that this took place repeatedly through a series of years.

Amalekites] see iii. 13. *children of the east*] a general expression for all the inhabitants of the Syro-arabian desert, who were regarded by the Israelites as near relations, descended from Abraham by Hagar, Keturah, and other concubines (Gen. xxv. 6). The Midianites themselves were "children of the east." The present verse, as also ver. 33 and vii. 12, represents the invaders as consisting of one of those confederations of Arab tribes which are frequently formed for purposes of war and plunder; but the main body of the narrative in both sources speaks only of Midianites.

4. *till thou come unto Gaza*] As the Midianites made their incursions from the east and north-east, this is a most graphic expression, Gaza being the most south-westerly point of Canaan; see i. 18, note.

5. *grasshoppers*] R.V. **locusts**. Cp. vii. 12, where their camels are said to be as the sand in number.

7—10. These verses are commonly assigned to the Deuteronomistic editor.

8. *a prophet*] His message is similar to that of the angel of the Lord in ii. 1, 2.

10. *Amorites*] See iii. 5, note.

11. *And there came &c.*] R.V. **And the angel of the Lord came.** *an oak*] R.V. **the oak**, the well-known sacred tree which was doubtless pointed out by subsequent tradition as the seat of the revelation, beside the local altar (ver. 24).

*Ophrah*] An unidentified



and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the LORD appeared 12 unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty *man* of valour. And Gideon said unto him, O my 13 lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where *be* all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the LORD looked upon him, and said, 14 Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said 15 unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house. And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be 16 with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, 17 then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not 18

locality in Western Manasseh, spoken of in ver. 15 as insignificant; but at one period in the history of Israel it must have been a well-known sanctuary and considerable place of pilgrimage (viii. 27). All trace of it seems to have disappeared; for the identification with Fer'ata, 5 m. S.W. from Nābulus (see xii. 13, note) is impossible.

*that pertained unto Joash*] Joash therefore was the hereditary chieftain of the village. *the Abiezrite*] Abiezer being a clan of Western Manasseh (Josh. xvii. 2).

*threshed*] R.V. **was beating out**. In ordinary times the corn would have been threshed out by the treading of cattle on the open floor on the top of some neighbouring hill. It was only poor people who beat out their scanty store of grain with a stick (cp. Ruth ii. 17). *by the wine-press*] R.V. **in the wine-press**, i.e. concealed in the rock-cut tank on the hill-side, in which the grapes were trodden.

12. *mighty man of valour*] The salutation of Gideon as a "stout warrior" foreshadows the substance of the message. 13.

*miracles*] R.V. **wondrous works**. The A.V. translation "miracle" is not amiss if it be understood that in the Biblical sense every display of God's power and grace may be so named, whether it breaks through a law of nature or not. 14. *the Lord*] i.e. the angel of the Lord. The variation is not uncommon; see Gen. xvi. 7, 13; xxii. 11, 12; Ex. iii. 2, 7; Judg. xiii. 18, 22.

*this thy might*] The angel recognises Gideon's natural valour; but it is the Divine mission that secures his success. 15. *O my Lord*] The Hebrew word as pointed (*Adonai*, not *Adoni*) implies that Gideon knew himself to be addressing the Divine Lord.

*wherewith*] or, "by what means" (cp. xvi. 5). *my family is poor &c.*] lit. "my clan [or, 'thousand'] is the weakest in Manasseh."

*father's house*] not household, but sub-clan; see Josh. vii. 17. Though Gideon belonged to the chiefly family, he was not the natural leader of his clan while his father, and perhaps elder brothers, were alive. 17. *thou*] emphatic: R.V. **that it is**

hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set *it* before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

- 19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened *cakes* of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought *it* out unto him under the oak, and presented *it*. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened *cakes*, and lay *them* upon this  
20 rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that *was* in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened *cakes*; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened *cakes*. Then the angel of the LORD departed out  
21 of his sight. And when Gideon perceived that he *was* an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I  
22 have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. And the LORD said unto him, Peace *be* unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.  
23 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it *is* yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.  
24 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto

**thou that talkest.**

**18.** *present*] or "offering" (Heb. *minḥah*;) see iii. 15, note. The translators seem to have avoided the usual technical word here, though not in xiii. 19, because the "present" included, it would appear, a kid, which would of course constitute a burnt-offering (*olāh*), not a "meat-offering." **19.**

*unleavened cakes*] See Ex. xxiii. 18.

*ephah*] The estimates of the Hebrew ephah, all based on somewhat uncertain data, vary from over eight to under three English gallons: the tenth part of an ephah of flour was the meat-offering that accompanied the daily burnt-offering (Nu. xxviii. 5).

*broth*] In old times, as in Arabia still, boiling was the usual method of cooking flesh (1 Sam. ii. 13; Mic. iii. 3).

**20.** *this rock*] Heb. "yonder rock," pointing to it as he spoke.

*pour out the broth*] as a drink-offering. The drink-offering of the later ritual is always wine (Nu. xv. 5). Drink-offerings of water are mentioned in 1 Sam. vii. 6, and 2 Sam. xxiii. 16; cp. the commentators on John vii. 37.

**21.** *staff*] The angels in the older Hebrew literature always appear in the guise of men; hence the staff, which the Hebrew traveller, like the modern Bedouin, was never without (Mark vi. 8).

*departed*] presumably in the flame; see xiii. 20. **22.** *an angel*] R.V. **the angel.**

*for because I have seen*] R.V. **forasmuch as I have seen.** Cp. xiii. 23; Gen. xvi. 13; xxxii. 30; Ex. xx. 19; xxxiii. 20; Isa. vi. 5.

**23.** *peace &c.*] Hence (ver. 24) the name "Jehovah-shalom," *i.e.* "the Lord is peace."

**24.** *unto this day*] In Northern Israel the local sanctuaries continued down to the captivity (722 B.C.).

**25—32.** A fuller but independent account of Gideon's altar, presumably from a different source.

him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: and build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children

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25. *even the second bullock*] There seems here to be some disorder in the text, but no satisfactory restoration has as yet been suggested. If the reading "second" bullock is correct, the word must be used in some technical sense to the meaning of which we have not the key. LXX. has "fatted bullock." *altar of Baal*] lit. "altar of the [local] Baal." The narrative distinguishes the local god from Jehovah in the manner of Hosea and the prophets; but this distinction was not clearly present to the mass of unenlightened Israelites in ancient times. *grove*] Heb. *ashêrah*; See iii. 7, note.

26. *this rock*] R.V. **this stronghold** (Heb. *mā'ōz*). In ver. 20 the word is *sela'* ("rock"). *in the ordered place*] an obscure expression. R.V. has **in the orderly manner**;

R.V. marg. "with that pertaining to it." 27. *took ten men of his servants*] Perhaps this formed part of the directions in ver. 25, which have now become confused.

*his father's household*] Heb. "father's house": see ver. 15. 31. *Will ye plead &c.*]

The pronoun is here emphatic. Joash means to say: "It is not your business, but the Baal's; it would be irreverent to a degree worthy of death to interfere in a matter which is entirely the god's affair."

VI. 33—VIII. 3. The Midianite invasion; Gideon's campaign.

33. *Amalekites &c.*] See ver. 3, note. *went over*] viz. the



of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched  
 34 in the valley of Jezreel. But the spirit of the LORD came upon  
 Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after  
 35 him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who  
 also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto  
 Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came  
 up to meet them.

36 And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine  
 37 hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool in  
 the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and *it be dry*  
 upon all the earth *beside*, then shall I know that thou wilt save  
 38 Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he  
 rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together,  
 and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.  
 39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against  
 me, and I will speak but *this* once: let me prove, I pray thee,  
 but *this* once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the  
 40 fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did  
 so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there  
 was dew on all the ground.

7 Then Jerubbaal, who *is* Gideon, and all the people that  
*were* with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of

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Jordan. *valley*] Heb. 'emek; see i. 19, note. *Jezreel*] mod.

Zer'in, lies at a height of 402 feet above sea-level, in lat. 32° 33' N., almost upon the watershed between the valley of the Kishon, which drains to the Mediterranean, and the valley of the Jālūd, which descends by Beth-shean to the Jordan. Modern geographers are not agreed which of these valleys is here meant by the valley of Jezreel, but the better opinion (see Josh. xvii. 16) is that the valley of Jezreel is that to the west, either the whole Merj ibn 'Amir, west of Gilboa, or the south-eastern part of it. 34. *came upon Gideon*] lit. "clothed itself with Gideon," i.e. entered into him. The expression is quite different from that applied to Samson in xiv. 6 &c. *blew a trumpet*] Cp. iii. 27. *was gathered*] lit. "followed the call."

35. *Manasseh*] Gideon's own tribe. *and he sent messengers &c.*] Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali lay on the other side of the valley in which the enemy was encamped. Their levies therefore could not, and did not, immediately join Gideon's people, but advancing towards them menaced the enemy from behind.

36—40. The deposition of dew depends on the cooling of the earth's surface, and objects on that surface, relatively to the atmosphere. In certain circumstances there is a natural possibility of a fleece on a threshing area becoming saturated with dew while the rest of the floor remains dry; there is none whatever of the fleece remaining dry while the surrounding threshing area is wetted with dew.

VII. 1. *rose up early*] i.e. simply, bestirred themselves; cp. Zeph. iii. 7; Jer. vii. 13; xi. 7. Gideon was posted (cp. ver. 8) at some point in the mountains of Manasseh which border the plain



Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. And the <sup>2</sup> LORD said unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the <sup>3</sup> people, saying, Whosoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people *are* <sup>4</sup> yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto <sup>5</sup> the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him

of Jezreel on the south, and, naturally, beside a fountain. The precise localities are unknown; for the hill of Moreh ("the hill of the revealer") is not mentioned again, and Harod reappears only in the adjective "Harodite" (2 Sam. xxiii. 25; also 1 Chr. xi. 27, corrected). Some recent writers would identify the well of Harod with the great fountain near Jezreel, now 'Ain Jâlûd, which is the source of the stream descending from Jezreel to the Jordan past Beth-shean, and suppose the hill of Moreh to be one of the spurs of Little Hermon. But the camp of the Midianites lay further to the west (see vi. 33, note), and, as Gideon's object was to surprise them, he cannot have posted himself in the very midst of the plains over which the vast herds of the enemy roved (see vi. 5). *host*] R.V. **camp**. The Heb. *mahaneh* (cp. Mahanaim, i.e. "two hosts," or "two camps") has both senses, and the word is translated sometimes "host" and sometimes "camp" in the course of the present narrative.

2-8. The process of elimination here described reduces Gideon's host to a small band, consisting, as we may infer from viii. 2, mainly of his own clansmen of Abiezer.

3. *fearful and afraid*] Cp. the law in Dt. xx. 8. *depart early*] R.V. **depart**; marg. "go round about." The verb so translated occurs only here.

*Gilead*] Probably this difficult expression is a proverbial one; the key to its meaning has been lost.

4. *try*] lit. "smelt," as silver is "tried" or "smelted." The word is the same as that used in Ps. xii. 6; Isa. i. 25. The cowardly having been eliminated from Gideon's host, a further selection is made of those men who are least liable to be attacked by violent thirst,—an important requisite in a hot wilderness pursuit.

5. *with his tongue, as a dog lappeth*] The reading has been suggested: "that lappeth of the water [with his hand: see ver. 6] as a dog lappeth with his tongue"; this at least gives the sense. The idea plainly is of one who is accustomed to slake his thirst as

shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all *the rest of* Israel every man unto his tent, and retained *those* three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed *men that were* in the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, *there was* a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This *is* nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: *for* into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. And it was *so*, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream,

opportunity offers, without loss of time. 8. *So the people took victuals*] The Heb. cannot bear this sense. Translate with LXX. and other ancient authorities, changing one letter of the text: "so they [the three hundred] took the victuals of the people [who had been sent home], and their trumpets." *unto his tent*] a common expression, not to be taken literally, for going home; see 1 K. xii. 16; and cp. below, xix. 9, xx. 8. *beneath him*] See note on ver. 1.

9. *get thee down unto*] or rather, perhaps, as in R.V. margin, "against." The preposition (*be*) here and in ver. 11 is different from that in ver. 10 (*al*). In the present verse Gideon is actually commanded and encouraged to make the decisive attack at once (see ver. 11). It is only when he hesitates that he is allowed to begin by making a reconnaissance along with Phurah. 10. *unto the host*] See preceding note. *outside*] R.V. **outermost part**, i.e. as far as the outposts. 12. Cp. vi. 5. 13. *a cake of barley bread*] emblematic of the Israelite peasantry, barley being

and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. And he divided 16 the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and 17 do likewise: and behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be *that*, as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a 18 trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, *The sword* of the LORD, and of Gideon. So Gideon, and the hundred men that 19 *were* with him, came unto the outside of the camp *in* the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the

the bread-stuff of the poorer class (cp. 2 K. vii. 1).

14. This would imply that the prowess of Gideon was already known to some of the Midianites.

15. *worshipped*] threw himself on the ground in adoration.

16. *pitchers*] The ordinary earthenware vessel for carrying water (Gen. xxiv. 14 &c.) or keeping meal (1 K. xvii. 12—16: E.V. "barrel"). *lamps*] R.V. **torches**; same word as is rendered "firebrand" in xv. 4. "The *zābīt*, or *āghā* of the police, used frequently to go about the metropolis by night, often accompanied by the executioner and the shealegee or bearer of a kind of torch called *shealeh*, which is still in use. This torch burns, soon after it is lighted, without a flame, except when it is waved through the air, when it suddenly blazes forth: it therefore answers the same purpose as our dark lantern. The burning end is sometimes concealed in a small pot or jar, or covered with something else, when not required to give light; but it is said that thieves often smell it in time to escape meeting the bearer" (Lane, *Mod. Egyptians*).

17. *Look on me*] i.e. "Observe what I do." His chief reliance must however have been on the trumpet signal (ver. 18). The attack was to be made by night by three distinct companies, separated by considerable space and an intervening army. Success depended on the darkness.

*outside*] See ver. 11. 18. *all that are with me*] one of the companies of a hundred (ver. 19).

*The sword*] supplied from ver. 20. But R.V. takes the words as they stand, and renders: **For the Lord and for Gideon**. The battle-cry of the heathen Arabs in like manner is taken sometimes from the name of the tribal god, sometimes from that of the tribe itself or its leader.

19. *middle watch*] The Jews, like the Babylonians and the Greeks, had only three night watches (comp. Lam. ii. 19: "at the beginning of the watches;" Exod. xiv. 24; 1 Sam. xi. 11: "in the morning watch"). The Romans had four, and it is their practice that is presupposed in the expressions employed in Mk. xiii. 35; Lu. xii. 38; Mt. xiv. 25; Mk. vi. 48. The beginning of the middle watch here would be about 10 p.m.

*they had but newly* &c.] The enemy would thus be somewhat more on the alert than at the end of a watch. But the slight bustle within the camp connected with the change of



- watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers  
 20 that *were* in their hands. And the three companies blew the  
 trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their  
 left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow  
*withal*: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.  
 21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp:  
 22 and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. And the three hun-  
 dred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword  
 against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host  
 fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, *and* to the border of Abel-  
 23 meholah, unto Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered  
 themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out  
 of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.

watch would be itself a signal to Gideon's two detached parties to prepare for the silence after the watch had been set—a silence to be broken by the blast of his trumpets and the shout of his men.  
 20. *The sword of*] or rather, as in R.V. marg., "A sword for."  
 21. *and cried, and fled*] So the margin of the Hebrew text. The text itself has (R.V.) **and they** [Gideon's men] **shouted and put them to flight.** 22. R.V. **and they blew the three hundred trumpets.** *even throughout all the host*] R.V. **and**

**against all the host.** The Midianite swords, in Midianite hands, were for the Lord and for Gideon. *to Beth-shittah in Zererath &c.*] R.V., more exactly, **as far as Beth-shittah towards Zererah, as far as the border** (Heb. "lip" or "bank") **of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.** The repeated expression "as far as" perhaps indicates the first points where a rally was attempted. *Abel-meholah*] (*i.e.* "meadow of dancing"), a spot in the district of Beth-shean (1 K. iv. 12), was the home of Elisha the prophet (1 K. xix. 16) and probably also of Adriel the son of Barzillai "the Meholathite" (1 Sam. xviii. 19; 2 Sam. xxi. 8). According to Jerome it lay in the valley of the Jordan 10 Roman miles to the south of Beth-shean. This points to a locality at or near the place ("lip") where the W. Mâlih, coming down from the 'Ain Mâlih, joins the Jordan valley "under a low ridge, like a windrow" (Robinson). The eastward flight of the Midianites would necessarily take place down the Beth-shean valley; and in it, or in the lower parts of the Jordan valley, the other places mentioned in the present verse must be sought. Of *Tabbath* nothing is known. *Zererah* is not again mentioned; but probably we ought to read *Zeredah*, which according to 2 Chr. iv. 17, compared with 1 K. vii. 46, is identical with or adjacent to *Zarethán*, a point in the Jordan valley in the region of Beth-shean (1 K. iv. 12).<sup>\*</sup> *Zeredah*, the birth-place of Jeroboam, is probably a different place, for it lay within the tribe of Ephraim (1 K. xi. 26). *Beth-shittah*, the first rallying place of the Midianites, may conceivably (as Robinson suggests) be the modern Shutta, on the north side of the valley, halfway between Jezreel and Beth-shean. But we cannot lay much weight on the similarity of names derived from so common a plant as the acacia (*shittah*). 23. *gathered themselves*] *i.e.* followed the summons



And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, 24 saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. And they took two prin- 25 ces of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the *other* side Jordan. And the men of Ephraim 8 said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that *thou* calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply. And he said unto them, 2 What have I done now in comparison of you? *Is* not the glean- ing of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi- ezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Mi- 3 dian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.

And Gideon came to Jordan, *and* passed over, he, and the 4 three hundred men that *were* with him, faint, yet pursuing *them*. And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, 5

to battle; comp. vi. 35, note.

**24. all the hill country of Ephraim.** The northern tribes, which were already in movement (vi. 35), would occupy the northern passages of the Jordan; thus Gideon foresaw that the fugitives must turn southwards, and could be intercepted by a rapid movement on the part of the Ephraimites. *the waters*] the fords of the Jordan.

**as far as Beth-barah, even Jordan.** Beth-barah is unknown. From the context it must have been one of the most southern fords of the river. **25. two princes**] Heb. "the two princes." Oreb (*i.e.* "raven") was killed at "Raven's Rock" (Isa. x. 26), Zeeb (*i.e.* "wolf") at "Wolf's Lair." Neither locality is known. *winepress*] or "wine vat," the vessel or rock-cut excavation under the press, which receives the must.

*brought the heads*] So David cuts off Goliath's head as a trophy (1 Sam. xvii. 51; cp. also 2 Sam. xx. 22; 2 K. x. 7).

**to Gideon beyond Jordan**] our first intimation that Gideon himself had crossed.

**VIII. 1—3.** A similar incident, but with a different issue, is related in xii. 1—6. In both cases the Ephraimites probably had a share in the booty in their mind, but they were also jealous of the preeminence over Manasseh which they had held since the time of Joshua; cp. Gen. xlviii. 13, 14. **2. gleaning**] cp. xx. 45.

**4—21.** The pursuit and capture of Zebah and Zalmunna: from another source,—probably older, to judge from its more primitive colour.

**4. passed over**] Heb. "passing over" or "in his passage."

**5. Succoth**] *i.e.* "thickets" or "booths." According to Josh. xiii. 27 there was a Succoth eastward of Jordan, in the former terri-

- loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they *be* faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.
- 6 And the princes of Succoth said, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto
- 7 thine army? And Gideon said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.
- 8 And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of

tory of Sihon king of Heshbon; and 1 K. vii. 46; 2 Chr. iv. 7, which speak of Solomon's foundries in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarethan, certainly suggest that there was one also on the Canaan side of the river. Neither here nor in Gen. xxxiii. 17 is there anything to compel the inference that the Succoth east of Jordan is intended. There is much to be said for the view that here we have to do with the western Succoth, which has been with very great probability identified by Robinson with the ruin called Sâkût, close to the presumed site of Abel-meholah (see above). "The eastern bank of the lower Jordan valley opposite to us was precipitous, apparently nearly 150 or 200 feet high, and the river was running close under it, about half a mile distant from us. The water of the river was not in sight because of the bushes and trees. ...Quite a number of places were visible from Sâkût...Tabor and Duhy (Little Hermon) we could see as we looked up through the great valley of Zerîn. In the eastern mountains W. Yâbis was over against us; and the great break of W. Zerka or the Jabbok was also in view....Near the foot of the bluff of Sâkût, towards the east, there breaks out a beautiful fountain of pure and sparkling water, under the shade of a thicket of fig-trees" (Robinson).

*the people that follow me*] lit. "the people at my feet"; cp. iv. 10. 6. *in thine hand*] i.e. in thy grasp. The motive of the refusal was fear of the Midianites and distrust of Gideon's power to protect against them. 7. *tear*] lit. "thresh"; see Am. i. 3. *thorns*] Describing the route to the N.W. of Sâkût, Robinson speaks of "a region...full of grass, wild oats and thistles, with an occasional thornbush. The soil was like that of an Ohio bottom. The grass intermingled with tall daisies, and the wild oats reached to the horses' backs, while the thistles sometimes overtopped the riders' heads...In some places it was difficult to make our way through this exuberant growth."

*briers*] Heb. *barkanîm*, only here and in ver. 16. A word of uncertain meaning which is left untranslated in most LXX. texts, but in that of Lucian is rendered *τριβολοί*, which can mean either thorns or threshing instruments (comp. Lat. *tribulum*, whence "tribulation"). On this latter interpretation, cp. 2 Sam. xii. 31. 8. *Penuel*] or Peniel (Gen. xxxii. 31) i.e. "face of God," on the north bank of the Jabbok (W. Zerka), the scene of Jacob's wrestling,—whence the name, according to Gen. xxxii. 30 ("I have seen God face to face"). It is here spoken of as a fortified place with a tower; according to 1 K.

Succoth had answered *him*. And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower. Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand *men*, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword. And Gideon went up *by* the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was secure. And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.

And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun was up, and caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him: and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, *even* threescore and seventeen men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men *that are* weary? And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness

xii. 25 it was refortified by Jeroboam I., apparently with the intention that it should become the chief town of his kingdom beyond Jordan. The site has not been identified; but, considering what Jeroboam thought of it, it ought not to be beyond the reach of conjecture were we once better acquainted with the topography of the district.

10. *Karkor*, where Zebah and Zalmunna with their shattered host at last drew breath with some feeling of security, is unidentified. It lay eastward or south-eastward of Penuel, and in the wilderness, for Gideon reached it "by the way [or caravan route] of them that dwelt in tents [*i.e.* the nomads] on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah."

11. *Nobah* must have been near Jogbehah. Nu. xxxii. 42 suggests that there were two Nobahs, the second of which was also known as Kenath. This is the mod. Kanawât, on the W. slope of the Jebel Hauran, 4068 feet above sea-level, in 36° 34' E. long., 32° 48' N. lat. *Jogbehah*, near the Nobah of our text, was one of the Gadite towns (Nu. xxxii. 35), and is usually identified with the mod. Jubêhât, 3468 feet above sea-level, about 6 m. N.N.E. from 'Ammân (Rabbath-ammon), on the road to es-Salt (Ramoth-gilead).

13. *before the sun was up*] Rather, "turned back from the battle [*i.e.* ceased his pursuit] at the ascent of Heres." Heres is an unidentified point.

14. *and caught*] Here we must begin a new sentence: "And he caught," viz., on his way back. *described*] lit. "wrote down." We are probably to understand a written list rather than a detailed verbal description of each of the seventy-seven men referred to.

*princes...elders*] What distinction, if any, there is here between princes and elders is not clear. The latter are the sheikhs or leading men of families.



- 17 and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.
- 18 Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men *were they* whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so *were* they; *each* one resembled the children of a king.
- 19 And he said, They *were* my brethren, *even* the sons of my mother: *as* the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he *was* yet a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man *is*, so *is* his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that *were* on their camels' necks.
- 22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over

16. *taught*] Some ancient authorities have "threshed," the reading of ver. 7.

17. *beat down*] He would reach Penuel before Succoth, but might prefer to chastise the open town of Succoth before laying siege to the fortress of Penuel.

18. *What manner of men &c.*] The slaying of Gideon's brethren is not mentioned in chaps. vi. and vii., and from them we should not have guessed that Gideon's resort to arms and persistent pursuit of the flying enemy were stimulated by the potent motive of blood revenge (ver. 19).

*Tabor*] The slaughter at Tabor was probably an incident in the advance of the Midianites into the plain of Esdraelon. *children of a king*] This is hardly a mere compliment. Among the nomads, where the common people are often badly fed in childhood, superior physique is one of the accepted marks of nobler birth.

20. As late as the fourth Christian century, as we learn from Nilus, the Arabs of the Sinaitic desert charged youths with the slaughter of prisoners, to accustom them to deeds of blood (W. R. S.).

21. *as the man.....strength* (or "valour")] *i.e.* courage for such an act cannot be expected of one who is not yet a man. The Midianites await with manly composure the inevitable operation of the law of blood. *ornaments*] "little moons" or crescent-shaped amulets, such as the Bedouins still attach to their riding cattle. Compare the modern horseshoe on the stable-door. In Isa. iii. 18 the same name ("round tires like the moon") is applied to an ornament or amulet worn by women.

22—35. Gideon's closing years.

22. *men of Israel*] This expression need not be taken as including Judah or any of the other tribes hitherto unnamed in this story. *Rule thou...and thy son &c.*] The dawning of the idea of a hereditary monarchy.

23. *I will not rule...the Lord shall rule*] The story of Abimelech (see below), however, shows that



you: the LORD shall rule over you. And Gideon said unto 24 them, I would desire a request of you, that you would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they *were* Ishmaelites.) And they answered, 25 We will willingly give *them*. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. And the 26 weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that *was* on the kings of Midian, and

certain rights of sovereignty actually were exercised by Gideon and his family (see note on ix. 2), about the transmission of which there was a question after his death. At any rate neither in Gideon's time nor in the succeeding generations was there anything approaching to what could be called a theocracy. The view that the kingship is an infringement of the Divine sovereignty (cp. 1 Sam. viii. 6 sqq; x. 18 sqq.) appears only in a few passages in the old history. More commonly the anarchy of the period of the judges is represented as disastrous, and the kingship, especially that of the house of David, as a good gift of God. **24.**

*give me*] "In ancient Arabia the chief took the fourth part of the spoils of war, and had also certain other perquisites, particularly the right to select for himself, before the division, some special gift (*ṣafāyā*), such as a damsel or sword. Among the Hebrews, in like manner, the chief received a liberal share of the booty (1 Sam. xxx. 20), including some choice gift corresponding to the *ṣafāyā* (Judg. v. 30; viii. 24)." W. R. Smith, *Rel. of Semites*, p. 440. *ear-*

*rings*] R.V. marg. "noserings." The Hebrew, *nezem*, may mean either. It is "noserings," especially, in Gen. xxiv. 47, Isa. iii. 21, Ezek. xvi. 12, Prov. xi. 22; "earring" in Gen. xxxv. 4, Ex. xxxii. 2, Prov. xxv. 12. Here it clearly means "earring," as noserings are seldom worn by men, and never by men of Semitic race. *prey*] R.V. **spoil**, stripped from the slain. *Ishmaelites*]

nomadic "Arabs;" a wider word than "Midianites"; cp. vi. 1, note. Earrings were also worn by the Assyrians (see the monuments), but not by the Hebrews. The point however lies partly in the word "golden," Arabia being then celebrated for the abundance of its gold. Auriferous rocks have been found by recent travellers in Madian, but the alluvial gold seems now to be exhausted.

**25.** *garment*] Heb. *simlah*, the blanket-shaped piece of woollen cloth which was worn as a mantle over the tunic (*kuttoneth*) or waistcloth (*ezôr*).

**26.** *a thousand and seven hundred of gold*] *i.e.* shekels. According to the latest investigations (Ridgeway) the oldest Hebrew shekel was probably a weight of 130 grains. Thus the gold shekel would be equivalent to the Homeric talent, the conventional value of an ox. The English sovereign contains 113 grains of pure gold. For the Hebrew silver shekel see below on ix. 4.

*ornaments*] see ver. 21. *collars*] R.V. **pendants** (Heb. *netiphôth*, lit. "drops"); see Isa. iii. 19 ("chains"; R.V. "pendants"). *purple*] Heb. *argaman*, red purple, as distinguished

- 27 beside the chains that *were* about their camels' necks. And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, *even* in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which  
 28 *thing* became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house. Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.
- 29 And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own  
 30 house. And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body  
 31 begotten: for he had many wives. And his concubine that *was* in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he  
 32 called Abimelech. And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father,  
 33 in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites. And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and

from violet or blue purple (*tekeleth*), both made with the costly murex dye. *chains*] Heb. "neck chains," for ornament. In Cant. iv. 9 the word is used of a woman's neck chain. 27.

*ephod*] The most familiar use of this word is as denoting a part of the priestly dress which was made of linen. But the present ephod was made of gold, or plated with that metal, and the word "a whoring" implies that it was a kind of idol. Cp. Isa. xxx. 22, where the word "ornament" (R.V. "plating") is in the Hebrew *aphuddah*, the word *ephod* with a feminine termination. *all Israel*] see vi.

11; also above, ver. 22. *a snare*] See ii. 3. We are not to suppose that Gideon himself saw in this worship anything inconsistent with his perfect loyalty to Jehovah, whom he acknowledged in the name he gave to his youngest son (Jotham, *i.e.* "Jehovah is perfect"). That all images were inconsistent with Jehovah-worship was a truth that dawned on the Israelites but slowly. The prophets Hosea, Isaiah and Micah all bear witness to the fact that down to the Assyrian period images formed a regular part of the furniture of "houses of God" in the kingdom of Judah as well as in that of Israel.

28. *lifted up their heads no more*] It was probably about the same time that the Midianites received another crushing blow "in the field of Moab" at the hand of the Edomites; Gen. xxxvi. 35.

29. *dwelt in his own house*] *i.e.* was not again called into the field.

30. *many wives*] Gideon, like David, after he had become a man of wealth and consideration, sought to establish and extend his influence by numerous matrimonial alliances.

31. *his concubine*] called his slave-girl in ix. 18. Apparently she was a Canaanite; see ix. 1, 2, 28, and notes. *Abimelech*] *i.e.* "father of a king." By naming him Gideon acknowledged him as his son, and the contrast between his name ("father of a king") and his estate ("son of a handmaid") is hardly accidental.

33—35. Not part of the main narrative, but the editor's anticipatory summary and appreciation of the events of chap. ix.

went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, 34 who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: neither shewed they kindness to the house of 35 Jerubbaal, *namely*, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto 9 his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, Speak, I 2 pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, *which are* threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I *am* your bone and your flesh. And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of 3 all the men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts in-

33. *Baalim*] the **Baalim**; see ii. 11. *Baal-berith*] or El-berith, the local god of the Canaanites of Shechem (ix. 4, 46). To what extent the Israelites became involved in his worship may be learned from the following chapter.

#### IX. *King Abimelech*.

1. *Shechem*] mod. Nâbulus, 1870 feet above sea-level, occupies a central position in the hill-country of Ephraim, where the road from Hebron and Jerusalem to the north (see below, xxi. 19), is crossed by one of the trade routes from Gaza to Damascus. The valley of Shechem between Ebal and Gerizim has been spoken of by travellers as the paradise of the Holy Land. It is frequently mentioned in the patriarchal histories (Gen. xii. 6; xxxiii. 18 sqq.; xxxiv. 2 &c.) in such a way as shows that it must have been a sanctuary from ancient times, and in the Book of Joshua it is spoken of as a city of refuge, a Levitical city, and the resting-place of the bones of Joseph (xxi. 21; xxiv. 32). It was the scene of the meeting of the ten tribes at which Jeroboam was chosen king (1 K. xii. 1 sqq.), and was for some time his capital. After the exile it became the principal city of the Samaritan community, and the seat of their schismatic worship on Mount Gerizim. *house of his mother's father*] lit. "his mother's father-house," *i.e.* his mother's clan. 2. *men of Shechem*] Heb. *ba'alîm* (lit. "owners," or landholders), an expression used also by the Phoenicians to denote free citizens; so throughout this chapter. In viii. 5 &c. ("men of Succoth"), the word is different. From ver. 28 (*q.v.*) it seems almost certain that these "men" of Shechem were of Canaanite descent (Hamorites), and that it was only after the total destruction of the city by Abimelech (ver. 45) that an Israelite town was formed on the spot.

*Whether is better &c.*] The question shows that Gideon had wielded some kind of sovereignty which would naturally be transmitted to his sons collectively; many examples in Semitic history show that in the absence of a formal sovereignty the influence of a numerous and wealthy family tends



clined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother.  
 4 And they gave him threescore and ten *pieces* of silver out of the  
 house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and  
 5 light persons, which followed him. And he went unto his  
 father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of  
 Jerubbaal, *being* threescore and ten persons, upon one stone:  
 notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was  
 6 left; for he hid himself. And all the men of Shechem gathered  
 together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made  
 Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

to become little less than kingly. 4. *threescore and ten* [pieces, *i.e.* shekels] *of silver*] At this period, and indeed down to the Exile, the shekel was a weight, not a coin (cp. Gen. xxiii. 16). When the Jews began to coin money of their own under Simon Macabaeus (B.C. 141) the silver shekel was struck on the Phoenician standard and weighed about 220 grains, a little more than the English half-crown of 218 grains. The weight of the silver shekel in earlier times has been much disputed, the main question being whether the unit was about 130 grains (so Ridgeway: see note on viii. 26), or twice as great (258 grains, according to Petrie). The small sum mentioned in the passage before us can hardly have done more than furnish earnest money to Abimelech's mercenaries (cp. xvii. 10, below, where examples of the purchasing power of the shekel are cited).

*house of Baal-berith*] In antiquity there was no sharp line between public treasure and temple treasure. Consecrated treasures were protected (so far) from private peculation, but remained available for occasions of public need (1 K. xv. 18; 2 K. xviii. 15; 2 Sam. viii. 11). So at Athens the public treasure lay in the inner chamber of the Parthenon. *light persons*] "restless" or "hot-headed" ("unstable": Gen. xlix. 4). 5. *upon one stone*] a deliberate and cold-blooded massacre,—perhaps with some of the forms of a public execution. *Jotham*] See viii. 27, note.

6. *all the house of Millo*] Heb. "all Beth-millo." The Millo at Jerusalem was a fortress (2 Sam. v. 9; 1 K. xi. 27). Here also we must understand a fortified quarter of Shechem, or a fortified village near it.

*king*] This was an attempt to establish a semi-Canaanite domination in central Palestine, and was necessarily foredoomed to failure, since the Hebrews were by far the stronger element in this part of the country. From data subsequently supplied by this chapter (see especially vv. 22, 25, note, and 55, where Abimelech's followers are called the "men of Israel") we may infer that Abimelech soon perceived that he had more to gain by reigning as an Israelite in virtue of his father's blood, than by favouring the Canaanites, the people of his mother. *plain*] Heb. "oak,"

*i.e.* the sacred tree mentioned in Gen. xii. 6, 7, Dt. xi. 30, Josh. xxiv. 26. In Gen. xii. 6 this "secular tree" of Shechem is called "the oak of the revealer."

*pillar*] R.V. marg. has "garrison" (Heb. *nuṣṣab*), but A.V. is doubtless right; cp. Josh. xxiv. 26, where the great stone under the oak of the sanctuary at Shechem



And when they told *it* to Jotham, he went and stood in the 7  
top of mount Gerizim, and lift up his voice, and cried, and  
said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that  
God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to 8  
anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree,  
Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should 9  
I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man,  
and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to 10  
the fig tree, Come thou, *and* reign over us. But the fig tree 11  
said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good  
fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the 12  
trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and* reign over us. And the 13  
vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth  
God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then 14  
said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, *and* reign over  
us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint 15  
me king over you, *then* come *and* put your trust in my shadow:  
and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the

is expressly mentioned. The usual name of such a stone is *maggeba*. Hosea (iii. 4) speaks of the *maggeba* as an invariable feature of the northern sanctuaries of his time. Such stones were at once rude altars to which the sacrificial blood was applied, and memorials or symbols of the presence of the deity.

7—20. Jotham's parable and curse. Fables or parables from trees were familiar to the Hebrews. Another is given in 2 K. xiv. 9; compare also 1 K. iv. 33, where proverbs or parables derived from trees are probably meant.

7. *Gerizim*, the hill to the south of Shechem, rises about 1000 feet above the town. "Several lofty precipices of Gerizim literally overhang the city, any one of which would answer Jotham's purpose. Nor would it be difficult to be heard, as everybody knows who has listened to the public crier of villages in Lebanon. In the stillness of evening, after the people have returned home from their distant fields he ascends the mountain side above the place, or to the roof of some prominent house, and there 'lifts up his voice and cries' as Jotham did" (Thomson). 9. *wherewith by me &c.*]

"even I by whom," or, perhaps, "which God [or, rather, gods] and man honour in me." For the sacrificial use of oil, see Nu. xv. 4, Lev. ii. 1, 6, 7; and for its use as an unguent, Ps. xxiii. 5. *to be promoted*] **to wave to and fro**; so vv. 11, 13. 13. *wine*] lit. "must," or new wine. *cheereth God*] or, rather, "gods."

This conception of one of the functions of sacrifice is not confined to the rudest peoples; it appears often in the Old Testament, and had to be combated by psalmists and prophets; see for example Ps. l.

14. *all*] There is a touch of sarcasm here. *bramble*] Heb. '*atad*, some kind of rhamnus, of which there are many species in Palestine. 15. *put your trust*] *i.e.* shelter yourselves.

*let fire come out*] The thorny underwood can give no shade to the

- 16 cedars of Lebanon. Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto  
 17 him according to the deserving of his hands; (for my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you  
 18 out of the hand of Midian: and ye are risen up against my father's house *this* day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant, king over the men of Shechem, because  
 19 he *is* your brother;) if ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house *this* day, *then* rejoice ye in  
 20 Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you: but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.  
 21 And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.  
 22, 23 When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel, then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with  
 24 Abimelech: that the cruelty *done* to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren.  
 25 And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along *that*

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lofty cedars, but a fire beginning in it may devour the whole forest; cp. Isa. ix. 18. The application to Abimelech is obvious, and includes an allusion to his base birth (cp. ver. 18). The modern Eastern view, which takes no account of the condition of a man's mother, is due to Mohammedanism, and had no place among the ancient Semites. 16. *sincerely*] i.e. dealt loyally towards the house of Gideon; see ver. 19. 17. *adventured his life far*] lit. "cast his life before him"; the image is that of a warrior charging the enemy in advance of his men.

21—57. The fulfilment of Jotham's curse in the destruction, first of Shechem and then of Abimelech. Many particulars of the narrative are obscure, partly from want of detail as to the persons engaged, and the antecedents of the incidents recorded, and partly also from textual difficulties.

21. *Beer*] Perhaps Beer-sheba, the remotest corner of Palestine, and beyond the reach of Abimelech. 22. *Israel*] cp. ver. 6.

23. *God sent an evil spirit*] cp. 1 Sam. xvi. 14; 1 K. xxii. 21 sqq.; also 1 K. xii. 15. 25. *liers in wait for him*] either, to assassinate him, or, (dativus incommodi) to annoy him, viz. by rendering the high roads insecure. *they robbed*] Shechem lay

at the crossing of two great through roads, and had commercial interests. That the Shechemites felt they were injuring Abime-

way by them: and it was told Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. And they went out *into* the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode *the grapes*, and made merry, and went *into* the house of their god, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we should serve him? *is* not *he* the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem: for why should we serve him? And would to God this people were under my hand; then would I remove Abimelech. And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come out. And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the

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lech by interfering with the through traffic implies that the latter was aiming at a kingship over the whole country; and it may be presumed that in the pursuit of this larger object he had offended the Shechemites by indifference to their special interests, perhaps by prohibiting them from levying dues (octroi) on through traffic.

*it was told*] Abimelech therefore was absent from Shechem, presumably in pursuit of some scheme of aggrandisement. Shechem was still nominally subject to him, and the machinations of the Shechemites were not meant to reach his ears. **26. brethren]**

probably in the sense of "partisans." Gaal, of whom nothing is known except from our chapter, was the leader of an armed band like that with which Abimelech (above, ver. 4), Jephthah (below, xi. 3), and David himself (1 Sam. xxvii. 8 sqq.) laid the foundations of their power.

*their confidence]* *i.e.* were encouraged by the presence of this force to adopt a more openly hostile attitude towards Abimelech.

**27. made merry]** R.V. **held festival.** (Heb. *hallelûm*). Etymologically the word is connected with the "hallelujah" of the Psalms, and with the Arabic *tahlîl*, "religious shouting" (at the sanctuary). We are therefore to understand a festival of thanks for the vintage, accompanied with shouts of praise.

**28.** An extremely difficult verse. The text is probably not quite sound, and perhaps we should read (with the aid of LXX.): "Who is Abimelech, and who is [the ruler of] Shechem, that we should serve him? Have not the son of Jerubbaal, and Zebul his officer, enslaved the men of Hamor the father of Shechem? but why should we serve him?" In any case the "we" is emphatic, and appears to denote Gaal and his men in contradistinction to the Hamorites.

**29. and he said &c.]** According to the following verses the notice of the revolt at Shechem was conveyed to Abimelech by Zebul without Gaal's knowledge. We can hardly therefore suppose that our verse speaks of an open challenge to Abimelech by Gaal. The omission of a single jot from the text gives the following: "then would I remove [*i.e.* depose] Abimelech, and would say to Abimelech, Increase thine army and come out" [*i.e.* meet me in battle]. So LXX.

**30. the ruler of the city]**



- 31 son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem; and behold, they  
 32 fortify the city against thee. Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that *is* with thee, *and* lie in wait in the field:  
 33 and it shall be, *that* in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and behold, *when* he and the people that *is* with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion.  
 34 And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that *were* with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem *in* four  
 35 companies. And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood *in* the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that *were* with him, from lying in wait.  
 36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains  
 37 as *if they were* men. And Gaal spake again and said, See there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim.  
 38 Then said Zebul unto him, Where *is* now thy mouth, where-with thou saidst, Who *is* Abimelech, that we should serve him? *is* not this the people that thou hast despised? go out,  
 39 I pray now, and fight with them. And Gaal went out before

Doubtless the head of a leading Shechemite family, who in Abimelech's absence guided the affairs of the town. In ver. 28 Gaal calls him Abimelech's "officer;" but we can hardly doubt that he was involved in the secret machinations of the Shechemites against the king, and that his resolution to warn the latter against Gaal was due less to loyalty than to jealousy of the open bid for the sovereignty of Shechem made by Gaal in ver. 28. In the sequel Abimelech takes the hint as regards Gaal, but evidently he had no confidence in Zebul, who seems to have perished in the destruction of the town.

31. *privily*] R.V. **craftily**. He was playing a double game.

*fortify*] R.V. **constrain the city** [to take part] **against thee**. Both renderings are somewhat precarious.

33. *as thou shalt find occasion*] lit. "as thine hand shall find," i.e. as thou art able.

*he and the people*] i.e. Gaal and his partisans. Here Zebul seems to promise that he will hold back the mass of the Shechemites from following Gaal.

35. *lying in wait*] R.V. **the ambushment**.

37. *by the middle*] lit. "from beside the navel of the land." A definite locality so named must be meant. The same designation (γῆς ὀμφαλός) was applied by the Greeks to Delphi.

*plain of Meonenim*] or rather "augurs' oak," the same as the "oak of the revealer" (A.V. "plain of Moreh"); see ver. 6, note.

39. *before*] The natural meaning of this is, "at the head of." But the subsequent context scarcely admits any stronger sense than "in the sight of" (see notes on vv.



the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. And 40  
 Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him, and many  
 were overthrown *and* wounded, *even* unto the entering of the  
 gate. And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah: and Zebul thrust 41  
 out Gaal and his brethren, that *they* should not dwell in  
 Shechem. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the 42  
 people went out *into* the field; and they told Abimelech.  
 And he took the people, and divided them into three com- 43  
 panies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and behold, the  
 people *were* come forth out of the city; and he rose up  
 against them, and smote them. And Abimelech, and the 44  
 company that *was* with him, rushed forward, and stood *in* the  
 entering of the gate of the city: and the two *other* companies  
 ran upon all *the people* that *were* in the fields, and slew them.  
 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and 45  
 he took the city, and slew the people that *was* therein, and  
 beat down the city, and sowed it *with* salt. And when all the 46  
 men of the tower of Shechem heard *that*, they entered into a  
 hold of the house of the god Berith. And it was told Abime- 47  
 lech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered  
 together. And Abimelech gat him up *to* mount Zalmon, he 48

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41, 42). **41.** *Arumah*] Unknown. Perhaps it is represented by the mod. el-'Orna, 6 m. S.S.E. from Shechem, where there are ruins. Possibly it may be the same as the Rumah of 2 K. xxiii. 36. An easy emendation would give "Abimelech returned to his ambushment" (W. R. S.) *Zebul thrust out Gaal*] after his defeat. The expulsion of Gaal implies that Zebul had reestablished his ascendancy in the city, and designed to make peace with Abimelech. Had the Shechemites meant war, they would not have parted with a useful band of auxiliaries. Abimelech on the other hand was resolved to treat the Shechemites as deadly enemies. **42.** *the people went out into the field*] Hardly for battle (see the preceding verse); perhaps to complete the vintage. They seem to have thought that Abimelech and his forces had drawn off. *they told*] *i.e.* Abimelech's scouts told. **44.** *company*] lit. "companies," as in R.V., but A.V. gives the right sense. *fields*] R.V. **field**, as in ver. 33. **45.** *sowed it with salt*] A figurative action, symbolizing complete and final devastation. A salt land "is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein" (Dt. xxix. 23). Cp. Zeph. ii. 9; Job xxxix. 6 (R.V. "salt land"); Ps. cvii. 34 (R.V. "a fruitful land into a salt desert"); Jer. xvii. 6 ("a salt land and not inhabited"). Shechem however speedily recovered. **46.** *the tower of Shechem*] Heb. *Migdal Shechem*, a dependency of Shechem, probably so called from the fortified temple of El-berith. *a hold*] R.V. **the hold**. *the god Berith*] Heb. *El-berith*, the same as Baal-berith; see above. **48.** *Zalmon*] *i.e.* "shady." A wooded hill near Shechem must be intended. It is by a mere coincidence that a hill to the south of

and all the people that *were* with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid *it* on his shoulder, and said unto the people that *were* with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste,  
 49 *and* do as I *have done*. And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put *them* to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women.

50 Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against  
 51 Thebez, and took it. But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut *it* to them, and gat them up to the top of  
 52 the tower. And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn  
 53 it with fire. And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone  
 54 upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull. Then he called hastily unto the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that *men* say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him  
 55 through, and he died. And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place.  
 56 Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he  
 57 did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: and all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

Shechem is at present known by the name of a Mohammedan saint, Selman (Suleiman or Solomon) el Farsi. 50. *Then went &c.*]

lit. "And Abimelech went." It is not necessarily implied that the siege of Thebez was connected with the revolt of the Shechemites. *Thebez*] Abimelech's siege of Thebez is referred to in 2 Sam. xi. 21. The town still existed under the same name in the days of Eusebius and Jerome, who define its position as less than 13 R. m. from Shechem on the road to Beth-shean. It is represented by the mod. Tûbas, a large village 10 m. in a straight line N.E. from Nâbulus and about 2 m. S.W. from Talûsa (Tirzah).

51. *top*] R.V. **roof**. 52. *hard unto*] *i.e.* close up to; ep. "hard after," "hard by."

*to burn it*] repeating his exploit at Shechem. 53. *a piece of a millstone*] R.V. **an upper millstone**; lit. "the riding piece" of a handmill or quorn. *all to brake*] an obsolete English expression. The *to* here represents the Saxon particle *te*, equivalent to the Germ. *zer-*, meaning "asunder" "in pieces." *all*] *i.e.* completely.

54. *armourbearer*] ep. 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. *slay me*] more exactly, "slay me outright." The Hebrew word is that used for despatching a wounded man (1 Sam. xiv. 13; xvii. 51). So the caliph Abd al-Malik was dissuaded from punishing his father's murderess lest people should know that a woman had killed him (W. R. S.). 57. *the curse of Jotham*] See ver. 20.

And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel Tola the 10  
son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he  
dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. And he judged Israel 2  
twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.

And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel 3  
twenty and two years. And he had thirty sons that rode on 4  
thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called  
Havoth-jair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead.  
And Jair died, and was buried in Camon. 5

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the 6

X. 1, 2. *Tola, the sixth of the Judges.*

1. *defend*] the word usually rendered "deliver" or "save."  
The English translators seem to have preferred the less aggressive  
word as the narrative mentions no war in Tola's day. *Tola*]

Both Tola and Puah or Puvvah occur also as the names of "sons"  
of Issachar, *i.e.* clans within that tribe (Gen. xlv. 13; Nu. xxvi. 23;  
1 Ch. vii. 1).

*Dodo*] This might be rendered: "his [*i.e.*  
Abimelech's] uncle." If this is the true meaning, "uncle" must be  
taken in a loose sense ("father's kinsman") and the connection will  
be through Gideon's uterine brothers (viii. 18, compared with Josh.  
xix. 22, where we see that Tabor was included in the territory of  
Issachar).

*Shamir*] in the hill country of Ephraim. The  
site is unknown, unless perhaps the name be an archaic form of  
Shomron (Samaria).

3—5. *Jair, the seventh of the Judges.*

3. *Jair* (cp. *Jairus*; Mk. v. 22) was a Gileadite, of the tribe of  
Manasseh (Nu. xxxii. 41; Dt. iii. 14; 1 K. iv. 13). 4. *ass colts*]

Cp. i. 14, v. 10. *Havoth-jair*] or rather **Havvoth-jair**, *i.e.*  
"hamlets of Jair," probably scattered over the pastoral country in  
the N.W. of Peræa.

*in the land of Gilead*] not in the narrower  
sense of the word, according to which Gilead was bounded on the  
north by the Yarmûk, but (see Dt. iii. 14; Josh. xiii. 30) in what  
was properly Bashan, north of that river, bordering on the Aramaean  
settlements of Geshur and Maacah. From Nu. xxxii. 41; Dt. iii. 14  
we learn that this district was granted to Manassites by Moses, but  
here we see that the actual occupation was effected much later  
(comp. v. 14, note). From 1 Chr. ii. 21, 22 it appears that the  
Jairite branch of Manasseh was mixed with a strain of Hezronites,  
*i.e.* half-settled nomads. The number of the hamlets varied; here  
they are 30; in Josh. xiii. 60 there are 60, and in 1 Chr. ii. 22 there  
are 23.

5. *Camon*] one of the Havvoth-jair. The site is un-  
known. A place named Καμὸς or Καμὸν is mentioned by Polybius  
(v. 70) in conjunction with Pella, as having been taken by Antiochus  
the Great.

X. 6—XII. 7. *Jephthah, the eighth of the Judges.*

The story of Jephthah itself is comparatively brief and admits of  
being told in few words. The apparent length of the narrative is  
due: (1) to the introduction (x. 6—18), by the Deuteronomistic re-  
dactor, which is a very characteristic example of his manner (see



LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the  
 7 Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of  
 8 the children of Ammon. And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that *were* on the *other* side Jordan in the  
 9 land of the Amorites, which *is* in Gilead. Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of  
 10 Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed. And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and  
 11 *also* served Baalim. And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, *Did not I deliver you* from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the  
 12 Philistines? The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I  
 13 delivered you out of their hand. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.  
 14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them  
 15 deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we  
 16 pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was

*Introd.*), and (2) to the account of the historical and legal argument between Jephthah and the Amorites as to the rightful ownership of the territory between the Arnon and the Jabbok (xi. 12—29).

6. *Baalim, and Ashtaroth*] **the Baalim and Ashtaroth**; see ii. 11, note, and ii. 13, note. The general sense of this verse is that they worshipped the gods of all their heathen neighbours.  
 7. *hands of the Philistines*] See also ver. 11, and comp. iii. 3, 31. The Philistines and the Ammonites were still the most dangerous enemies of Israel in the time of Saul and David. 8. *in that year...eighteen years*] It is difficult to resist the impression that these two incongruous clauses originally belonged to different narratives. 9. *passed over Jordan*] Of this attack of the Ammonites on the western tribes nothing is heard in the sequel. Jephthah is the hero of eastern Israel. 11. *Philistines*] See ver. 7. 12. *Zidonians*] No record has come down to us of wars between the Hebrews and the Phoenicians of Zidon. *Amalekites*] See iii. 13, vi. 3. *Maonites*] a nomad people, mentioned in association with Amalek in 1 Chr. iv. 41 (R.V.; cp. iv. 43); they have been conjecturally identified with the Ma'in, whose inscriptions have been found in N. Arabia, though the centre of their power lay in the South.



grieved for the misery of Israel. Then the children of Ammon 17 were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh. And the people *and* princes of Gilead said one to 18 another, What man *is he* that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty *man* of valour, 11 and he *was* the son of a harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and *his* wife's sons grew up, 2 and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou *art* the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and 3 dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men

17. *Mizpeh*] R.V. **Mizpah**, *i.e.* "watch-tower," or Mizpeh of Gilead, also called Ramath-mizpeh (Josh. xiii. 26), Ramoth-gilead (Dt. iv. 43; Josh. xx. 8, xxi. 38, &c.), Ramah, or rather "the Ramah" (2 K. viii. 29), and Gilead (Hos. vi. 8, xii. 11; comp. below, xii. 7, note) or Galeed (Gen. xxxi. 48), stood, as the name implies, on a commanding site on the Gileadite plateau. It was from early times a noted sanctuary (Gen. xxxi. 45—49; Hos. v. 1), and always an important strategical position. Ramoth in Gilead is mentioned in Deuteronomy and Joshua as a city of refuge (Dt. iv. 43; Josh. xx. 8) and in Joshua (xxi. 38) as a Levitical city. It was the capital of one of Solomon's twelve provinces (1 K. iv. 13). It figures largely in the history of the wars of the kings of Israel with the Aramaeans of Damascus (1 K. xxii.; 2 K. viii. 28—ix. 1), and as Maspha is mentioned in 1 Macc. v. 35 as having been taken by Judas Maccabaeus from the Ammonites. It is of course to be distinguished from the Mizpeh (mod. Neby Samwil) of xx. 1. According to Eusebius Ramoth-gilead lay 15 Roman miles to the west of Rabbath-ammon ('Anmân). The site has not been quite satisfactorily identified, but may be taken as represented more or less exactly by the mod. es-Salt, 2900 feet above sea-level, "on the slope of a hill which is crowned with a castle," 10 m. S. from the Jabbok, and 11 m. E. from the Jordan, the capital of the Belka, and a seat of commerce.

18. *the people and princes*] R.V. **the people, the princes**. The princes representing the people. They are called "elders" in ch. xi. Cp. viii. 14, note.

XI. 1. *Now Jephthah*] Here begins the older narrative, to which the preceding verses are an editorial introduction.

*Gilead begat*] Gilead is not the name of an individual, but of a district, or the population of that district, taken collectively. The general sense of vv. 1, 2 accordingly must be that Jephthah was a true-born Gileadite only on the father's side, and that therefore his "brethren," *i.e.* the Gileadites of pure race, called in ver. 7 the "elders" of Gilead, did not acknowledge him as one of themselves; cp. note on ix. 15. *a harlot*] a foreigner; cp. ver. 2. Harlots of Hebrew blood were not tolerated. 3. *Tob*] If, with R.V.,

4 to Jephthah, and went out with him. And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war 5 against Israel. And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to 6 fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: and they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with 7 the children of Ammon. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in 8 distress? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be 9 our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me *home* again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver 10 them before me, shall I be your head? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The LORD be witness between us, 11 if we do not so according to thy words. Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh.

12 And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou 13 art come against me to fight in my land? And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those *lands* again peaceably.

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we read "men of Tob" in 2 Sam. x. 6, 8, this district must have lain to the north or north-east of Gilead and probably in Aramaean (Syrian) territory. Compare also the Tobium or Tubium of 1 Macc. v. 13. *rain men*] i.e. wild fellows; cp. ix. 4. *went out with him*] as brigands or partisans; cp. 1 Sam. xxvii. 8 sqq.

5. *elders*] Cp. viii. 14, x. 18. 10. *witness*] lit. "hearer;" both witness and judge. 11. *all his words*] all that he had to say.

The proper sequel and explanation of this expression seems to be found in ver. 30, the context being interrupted in vv. 12—29 by an historical and legal argument which seems to be no integral part of the original narrative. The custom of ancient writers to throw their own reflections on historical situations into the form of speeches is too familiar to cause difficulty, and in the Old Testament such speeches seem frequently to have been inserted by editors as helps to understand the lesson of the narrative.

12. *against me &c.*] R.V. **unto me, to fight against my land.** 13. *Arnon...Jabbok...Jordan*] The territory here defined is, broadly speaking, that of Reuben and Gad, which before the conquest had belonged to the Amorites (ver. 22). The southern portion had once been Moabite, and became Moabite again (cp. iii.

And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the 14  
 children of Ammon: and said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, 15  
 Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the  
 children of Ammon: but when Israel came up from Egypt, 16  
 and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and  
 came to Kadesh; then Israel sent messengers unto the king 17  
 of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land:  
 but the king of Edom would not hearken *thereto*. And in  
 like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would  
 not consent: and Israel abode in Kadesh. Then they went 18  
 along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of  
 Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of  
 the land of Moab, and pitched on the *other* side of Arnon, but  
 came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon *was* the  
 border of Moab. And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon 19  
 king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said  
 unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into  
 my place. But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his 20  
 coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched  
 in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. And the LORD God of 21  
 Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of  
 Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all the land  
 of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. And they 22  
 possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even  
 unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So 23

12, note). The districts in dispute between Israel and Ammon must have lain on the eastern frontier, but it would seem from Jephthah's reply (ver. 15), and also from ver. 24, where Chemosh the god of Moab, and not Milcom or Molech the god of Ammon (2 Sam. xii. 30; 1 K. xi. 5, 33; 2 K. xxiii. 13; Jer. xlix. 1, 3), is spoken of as the divine lord of the enemy, that the author of this speech conceived Ammon to speak in the name of all the children of Lot.

**16.** *unto the Red sea*] viz. at Ezion-geber, at the head of the Gulf of Akaba; see Nu. xxxiii. 36. *Kadesh*] or Kadesh-barnea (Josh. x. 41), also called En-mishpat ("well of judgment:" Gen. xiv. 7), and "the water of Meribah" (Nu. xx. 13), lay to the south of Canaan and west of the Edomite country. Most modern scholars are inclined to place it at 'Ain Kudaïs in lat. 30° 31' N., long. 34° 31' E.

**17.** *sent messengers*] viz. after the affair of the spies and the failure of the people to effect an entrance into Canaan from the south; cp. Nu. xx. 14 sqq. and Dt. i. 46—ii. 9.

**18.** *the other side*] i.e. the northern. **19.** *unto Sihon*] Nu. xxi. 21 sqq. *Heshbon*] See ver. 26. *my place*] Western Palestine.

**20.** *coast*] R.V. **border**, as in ver. 18. *Jahaz*] Unknown. See Josh. xiii. 13; Nu. xxi. 23. It was Moabite before the time of Omri, and became so again in the time of Mesha (about 350 B.C.; see the Moabite stone); it was Moabite also in Isaiah's time (Isa. xv. xvi.), and in Jeremiah's (Jer. xlviii.). **22.** *the wilderness*]



- now the LORD God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it?
- 24 Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the LORD our God shall
- 25 drive out from before us, them will we possess. And now art thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight
- 26 against them, while Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore
- 27 did ye not recover *them* within that time? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge *this* day between
- 28 the children of Israel and the children of Ammon. Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.
- 29 Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over *unto* the
- 30 children of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children

the Syro-arabian desert; cp. ver. 13, note. 24. *Chemosh thy god*] The name of the tutelary deity of the Moabites (1 K. xi. 7, 33; 2 K. xxiii. 13; Jer. xlviii. 7, 13). The Moabites are called the people of Chemosh in Nu. xxi. 29; Jer. xlviii. 46. These passages have been illustrated and confirmed by the famous Moabite stone. Observe the strictly local and national character here ascribed both to Chemosh and to Jehovah. Each deity comes and goes with his peculiar people. 25. *Balak*] See Nu. xxii.—xxiv. *fight against them*]

There should be a full-stop here. 26. *Heshbon*] mod. Hesbân, 2954 feet above sea-level, about 23 m. N. from the Arnon and 16 m. E. from the Jordan. *Aroer*] mod. 'Ar'air, on the northern "edge of the valley" of the Arnon, about 11 m. E. from the Dead Sea (Josh. xii. 2, xiii. 16). *coasts of Arnon*] R.V. **side of Arnon.** *why therefore &c.*] R.V. **three hundred years; wherefore &c.** The figure in this argument from prescription is a round one. According to the present chronology of the Book of Judges there were 301 years from the first year of Cushan-rishathaim's oppression to the beginning of that of the Ammonites.

27. *the Judge*] of all the earth; cp. Gen. xviii. 25.

29. Resumption, to bring back the narrative to the point at which it had been left at ver. 11. *passed over*] (three times): "passed unto." *Gilead and (eastern) Manasseh*] The terms are here, roughly speaking, synonymous.

30. *vowed a vow*] To sacrifice a child in moments of great danger is a feature common to the religions of most of the heathen Semites. A Biblical example is 2 K. iii. 27. Centuries later Jeremiah finds it necessary to protest that Jehovah had never enjoined



of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever <sup>31</sup> cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up *for* a burnt offering. So <sup>32</sup> Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to <sup>33</sup> Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, *with* a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold, <sup>34</sup> his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was* his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, <sup>35</sup> that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, *if* thou <sup>36</sup> hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, <sup>37</sup> Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my

such sacrifices (Jer. xix. 5).

“whosoever” (R.V. marg.). A human being is intended—one of his house-mates. *my house*] at Mizpah; see ver. 34.

**33.** *Minnith*] Unidentified. According to the *Onomastica* it lay 4 R. m. from Heshbon on the road to Rabbath-ammon, *i.e.* towards the N.E. Wheat of Minnith was an article of commerce between Israel and Tyre (Ezek xxvii. 17), but it seems doubtful whether this Minnith is the same with that in Ezekiel.

*the plain* [or meadow] *of the vineyards*] R.V. **Abel-cheramim**. Unidentified. According to Eusebius it lay 6 R. m. from Rabbath-ammon, and even in his time was a vine-growing place.

**34—40.** Jephthah's daughter.

**34.** *to meet him*] We can hardly doubt that she did this in a spirit of self-devotion, fully aware of her father's vow. *timbrels*] hand-drums or tambourines, such as are still used to accompany Spanish dances; Ex. xv. 20; 1 Sam. xviii. 6.

**35.** The possibility that his daughter might be the first to meet him can hardly have been absent from Jephthah's mind when he made the vow; but at that time his personal feelings were swallowed up in his sense of the gravity of the crisis.

**37.** *go up and down*] Heb., as R.V., **depart and go down**, which gives no good sense; by omission of a single “jot” in the Hebrew we get the excellent sense: “that I may go and wander at large on the mountains” (W. R. S.). *bewail my virginity*] in that she must die un-

- 38 virginity, I and my fellows. And he said, Go. And he sent her away *for* two months: and she went with her companions, 39 and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her *according to* his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in 40 Israel, *that* the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.
- 12 And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon 2 thee with fire. And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. 3 And when I saw that ye delivered *me* not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are

married and childless.

39. *knew*] R.V. **had known**, *i.e.* was never married.

40. *to lament*] R.V. **to celebrate**; same word as in ch. v. 11, where it is rendered "rehearse." It is much to be wished that more were known of this annual four days' "celebration" of Jephthah's daughter by the women of Israel. It clearly was the characteristic festival associated in historical times with the local sanctuary of Mizpah, and in more than one respect must have resembled the annual mourning of the Phœnician women for Adonis (Tammuz; Ezek. viii. 14), and still more closely the commemoration of the sacrifice of a virgin (goddess) referred to by classical authors as observed at the Syrian Laodicea. The fact that the name of Jephthah's daughter was associated with an annual celebration of the kind is of itself enough to refute the idea that she was not really sacrificed but only dedicated to perpetual virginity.

XII. 1—6. War between Gilead and Ephraim.

The causes of this civil war are left in obscurity, for it seems that even the flimsy pretext alleged by the Ephraimites—that they had not been invited to take part in the expedition against the Ammonites—was quite baseless (ver. 2). Its explanation is to be sought in deep and long-standing tribal jealousy,—if it be not sufficiently accounted for by a desire for a share in the booty (cp. viii. 1—3).

1. *went*] or "crossed" [the Jordan]. *northward*] or perhaps, "to Zaphon" (R.V. marg.). Cp. Josh. xiii. 27, where Zaphon (unknown) is enumerated along with other places "in the valley [of Jordan]," such as Beth-haram and Beth-nimrah and Succoth, which had belonged to the kingdom of Sihon. Mizpah, where Jephthah was for at least two months after the close of the Ammonite war (see xi. 34, 39), certainly was not north of Ephraim, though the greater part of Gilead was. *we will burn thine*

ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me? Then <sup>4</sup> Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, *and* among the Manassites. And the <sup>5</sup> Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, *Art* thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; then <sup>6</sup> said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce *it* right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand. And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then <sup>7</sup> died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in *one of the cities of Gilead*.

And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel. And he <sup>8,9</sup> had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, *whom* he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. Then died Ibzan, and was <sup>10</sup> buried at Beth-lehem.

And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he <sup>11</sup>

house] Cp. below, xiv. 15; xv. 6. **4.** *Ye Gileadites &c.*] In these words tribal antipathy, we readily see, expresses itself in scorn and contempt; but their precise meaning is obscure. Probably the text is corrupt. The original LXX. omitted all that follows the first "Ephraim." A modern commentator suggests that the words "ye are fugitives of Ephraim" originally stood in ver. 6, and were spoken by the Gileadites. **5.** *took the passages of Jordan before*] lit. "took the fords of Jordan towards Ephraim."

**6.** *Shibboleth*] Various dialectical peculiarities of this kind were observable even in so small a country as Palestine. Peter's Galilean speech "bewrayed" him in Jerusalem (Matt. xxvi. 73). It is said that in the Sicilian Vespers (1282) Frenchmen were detected by their inability to say "ceci e ciceri." *forty and two thousand*] In David's time, less than a century afterwards, the whole levy of Israel was 30,000 men (2 Sam. vi. 1). Cp. below, chaps. xx., xxi. **7.** *in [one of] the cities of Gilead*] A slight change of text gives the reading of LXX.: "in his city (*ἡ πόλις*) Gilead," i.e. Mizpah; see above, x. 17.

**8—10.** *Ibzan, the ninth of the Judges.*

*Bethlehem*] Doubtless the Zebulonite Bethlehem (Josh. xix. 15), which has been identified with the mod. Bêt-Lahm, 7 m. W. by N. from Nazareth. The southern and as yet less important Bethlehem is in Judges (xvii. 7; xix. 1) called Bethlehem-judah. The name of Ibzan is perhaps connected in some way with the town of Abez or Ebez (Josh. xix. 20), which lay near the northern Bethlehem.

**11, 12.** *Elon, the tenth of the Judges.*



- 12 judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.
- 13 And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged
- 14 Israel. And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight
- 15 years. And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.
- 13 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the

**12.** *Aijalon*] The Zebulonite Aijalon is not mentioned elsewhere. The consonants are the same as those of the judge's name, and the word might equally well be pronounced Elon, in which case the judge is the eponymus of his city; cp. Gen. iv. 17.

**13—15.** *Abdon, the eleventh of the Judges.*

**14.** *nephews*] in the now obsolete sense of "grandchildren" (*ne-potes*); Heb. "sons' sons." *ass colts*] see x. 4; also v. 10. In other words, he was head of a large and wealthy family.

**15.** *Pirathon*] This place is mentioned in 1 Macc. ix. 50 as Phara-thoni or Pharathon, "a strong city in Judæa"—the Judæa of that period had an extended frontier—which was fortified by Bacchides. Robinson identifies it with the mod. Fer'ata, about 5 m. S.W. from Nâbulus (Shechem). *Amalekites*] see v. 14, note.

**XIII. 1—XVI. 31.** *Samson, the twelfth of the Judges.*

This popular story of a popular hero, occupying nearly a fifth of the whole space of the Book of Judges, is not only the longest but also the simplest of all its narratives. It bears no traces of being derived from a variety of written sources, and, if we except xiii. 1, xv. 20, and xvi. 31, is almost free from editorial additions. The two last-cited verses are, along with xiii. 5, the only passages in which he is spoken of as a "judge" or "deliverer" of Israel. So far as appears, his talents were not in the least magisterial or judicial, or even, strictly speaking, military. He never so far as we know made the least attempt at an organised resistance against the forces of the Philistines. His story, which comes before us probably in nearly the same form as that in which it had long been orally current, tells the personal exploits of a local hero, physically powerful but in intellectual and moral character weak and almost half-witted, whose strongest motives were neither religion nor patriotism but the purely self-regarding passions of love and revenge. Some expositors have sought to give the narrative a systematic character, and have fancied they detected in it a series of twelve adventures or labours, somewhat comparable to those of Hercules, with whom it was at one time usual to liken Samson. But it is certain that neither the first narrator nor the last editor had any idea of giving the story any such symmetry. It is worthy of notice that the localities connected with the name of Samson, which are much more clearly and definitely given than in the case of any of the other narratives in the Book of Judges, are all contained within an area of which Gaza, Ashkelon, Timnath, Eshtaol



LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. And there was a certain man of 2 Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren, and bare not. And the angel of the 3 LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou *art* barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, 4 and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean *thing*: for lo, thou *shalt* conceive, and bear a son; 5 and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the 6 woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance *was* like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he *was*, neither told he me his name: but he said unto me, 7 Behold, thou *shalt* conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean *thing*: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let 8 the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the 9 angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband *was* not with her. And the 10

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and Etam (near Bethlehem?) mark the extreme limits, and most of them are placed in the little valley of Sorek (W. Surar), at and above Timmath.

1. *did evil again*] cp. iii. 7, 12; iv. 1; vi. 1; xi. 6, and see *Introd.*

2—25. Samson's birth and early years.

2. *Zorah*] or Zoreah, mod. Sar'a, on a commanding site, 1170 feet above sea-level, on the north side of the valley of Sorek (W. Surar). Cp. notes on ver. 25 and xviii. 12. *family*] here synonymous with "tribe" (cp. xviii. 11, 19); for, according to Gen. xvi. 23, the tribe of Dan had no more than one family. 3.

*the angel of the Lord*] see ii. 1. In human form, see ver. 6.

4. *strong drink*] Heb. *shecar*,—whence the English "cider" through Lat. *sicera*,—the fermented juice of any other fruit than the grape.

*unclean*] Food by eating which she would contract ceremonial impurity.

5. *Nazarite*] see Nu. vi. and compare note on v. 2 above. The peculiarity of the Nazarite vow in the case of Samson (compare those of Samuel and John the Baptist) is that it is a lifelong vow, and undertaken not by himself but by his parents on his behalf.

*begin to deliver*] The work begun by Samson was carried on by Saul and completed by David.

6. *very terrible*] or awe-inspiring. 12. *now let &c.*]

woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me,  
 11 that came unto me the *other* day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he  
 12 said, I *am*. And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and *how* shall we do  
 13 unto him? And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. She may not  
 14 eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I  
 15 commanded her let her observe. And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we  
 16 shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not  
 17 eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that  
 18 he *was* an angel of the LORD. And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What *is* thy name, that when thy sayings  
 19 come to pass we may do thee honour? And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is* secret? So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered *it* upon a rock unto the LORD: and *the*

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R.V. marg. "now when thy words come to pass" &c. *How shall &c.*] *i.e.* what rules shall we observe or enforce in connection with him. 14. *any thing that cometh of the vine*] Cp. Nu. vi. 4; "nothing that is made of the grape vine, from the kernels even to the husk." This prohibition included the "dibs" or boiled grape juice, often called "honey" in Scripture, which was, and is, a common condiment eaten with bread by the Syrian peasantry. 15. *make ready a kid*] an expression of hospitality, on a humbler scale than that of Abraham, who made ready a calf; Gen. xviii. 7. In this as in other points the narrative is closely parallel to that of Ch. vi. 16. *bread*] or rather "food;" the flesh of the kid is meant. *must offer*] rather: "mayest offer." The angel, still keeping his incognito, says in substance: "I will not eat with thee; but if thou art minded to offer a burnt offering to Jehovah, thou mayest do so." 17. *do thee honour*] perhaps by naming the child after him; or more probably by sending a present. 18. *secret*] R.V. **wonderful**, in the sense of supernatural and beyond man's comprehension; see Ps. cxxxix. 6, where the same word is used. For the refusal of the angel to give his name, compare Gen. xxxii. 29. In the Old Testament names of angels (Michael and Gabriel) are found only in the late Book of Daniel. 19. *with a meat offering*] *i.e.* with its accompaniment of unleavened cakes; cp. vi. 12 sqq. *a rock*] Heb. "the rock," known to local tradition, called in ver. 20 "the altar," and probably used as such by subsequent generations, being consecrated by this theophany. For

angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven <sup>20</sup> from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the <sup>21</sup> Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the Lord. And <sup>22</sup> Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the Lord <sup>23</sup> were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these *things*, nor would as *at this time* have told us *such things* as these.

And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson : <sup>24</sup> and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the spirit <sup>25</sup> of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in <sup>14</sup>

the use of a rude block of stone as an altar compare Ex. xx. 25; 1 Sam. xiv. 33 sqq. *unto the Lord; and the angel did wondrously]*

The Hebrew scarcely admits of this sense; LXX. (A), with the change of one letter, gives: "to the Lord who doeth wondrous things."

<sup>21.</sup> The first sentence of this verse is a parenthesis.

<sup>22.</sup> Cp. vi. 22. <sup>23.</sup> *as at this time]* R.V. **at this time.**

<sup>24.</sup> *Samson]* i.e. "solar," or, perhaps, "little sun," from *shemesh* or *shamsh* ('sun'); cp. Shimshai (Ezr. iv. 8, 17). The pronunciation Samson (Shamshôn) which we have from the LXX. and Vulg. is more primitive than the Shimshôn of the present Hebrew text.

<sup>25.</sup> *to move him at times]* R.V. **to move him.** A.V. is somewhat paraphrastic, but the Hebrew verb seems to imply intermittency. *camp of Dan]* We learn from

xviii. 12 (cp. i. 34) that the Danites had not acquired any secure settlement in this quarter; the camp of Dan was probably their standing rendezvous in their frequent struggles with Canaanites and Philistines. *Eshtaol]* mod. Eshû'a, 878 feet above sea-level, 2½ m. N.E. from Zorah.

XIV. Samson's marriage-feast; his riddle and wager. How the riddle was found out and the wager paid.

<sup>1.</sup> *went down to Timnath]* Timnath or **Timnah**, mod. Tibneh, stands at a height of 800 feet above sea-level, on the south side of the W. Surar (valley of Sorek), 3 m. W. from Beth-shemesh and about 3½ m. S.W. from Zorah, which is higher up ("went down," "came up"). It is mentioned in Josh. xv. 10 as marking the northern frontier of Judah; but in Josh. xix. 43 it is reckoned to Dan. The population, as we see, was (partly at least) Philistine. According to 2 Chr. xxviii. 18 it was seized and occupied by Philistines in the reign of Ahaz; and Josephus (*Ant.* v. 8, 5) calls it a city of the Philistines. It seems to have been a place of some



2 Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now  
 3 therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth  
 4 me well. But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion  
 5 over Israel. Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, *to* Timnath, and came to the vineyards of  
 6 Timnath: and behold, a young lion roared against him. And the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as *he* would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had  
 7 done. And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

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strategic importance, being mentioned by Sennacherib as Ta-am-na-a, and as taken and destroyed by him after the battle of Eltekeh, immediately before his siege of Ekron. 2. *get her for me*] Cp. Gen. xxiv. 4; xxxiv. 4, &c. 3. *the daughters of thy brethren*]

"agnates." Among the ancient Israelites, as now among the modern Arabs, marriages between kinsfolk were preferred. Thus Laban says to Jacob (of Rachel) (Gen. xxix. 19): "It is better that I give her to thee than that I should give her to another man."

4. *that he sought an occasion*] i.e. that what he desired would prove an occasion of quarrel with the Philistines. 5. *vineyards*] Cp. oliveyards, xv. 5 (R.V.). "Timnath still exists on the plain, and to reach it from Zorah you must descend through wild rocky gorges,—just where one would expect to find a lion in those days when wild beasts were far more common than at present. Nor is it more remarkable that lions should be met with in such places than that fierce leopards should now maintain their position in the thickly settled parts of Lebanon, and even in these very mountains, within a few hundred rods of large villages. Yet such I know is the fact... There were then vineyards belonging to Timnath, as there now are in all these hamlets along the base of the hills and upon the mountain sides. These vineyards are very often far out from the villages, climbing up rough wadies and wild cliffs, in one of which Samson encountered the young lion" (Thomson). 6.

*came mightily*] a common expression for a sudden access of inspiration or divine enthusiasm. A.V. renders indifferently "came" and "came mightily" (see 1 Sam. x. 10; xi. 6). There is nothing religious in this inspiration; though ascribed to Jehovah as the source of all might it is not spiritual in the New Testament sense of that word. In 1 Sam. xviii. 10 an evil spirit from God "came mightily" (R.V.)



And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned 8  
 aside to see the carcase of the lion: and behold, *there was* a  
 swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he 9  
 took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to  
 his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat:  
 but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of  
 the carcase of the lion. So his father went down unto the 10  
 woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the  
 young men to do. And it came to pass, when they saw him, 11  
 that they brought thirty companions to be with him. And 12  
 Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto  
 you: if you can certainly declare it me *within* the seven days  
 of the feast, and find *it* out, then I will give you thirty sheets  
 and thirty change of garments: but if ye cannot declare *it* 13  
 me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of  
 garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that  
 we may hear it. And he said unto them, 14

Out of the eater came forth meat,

And out of the strong came forth sweetness.

And they could not *in* three days expound the riddle. And 15  
 it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto  
 Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto

upon Saul. 8. *returned*] went down to Timnah again, accom-  
 panied by his parents, to celebrate his marriage. *a swarm of*

*bees*] We may suppose that the bones of the lion had been picked  
 bare, and the hide baked and almost tanned in the sun. 10.

*a feast; for so used &c.*] In all parts of the East marriage-feasts  
 are important, and protracted so far as the means of the parties  
 permit. The statement that in those days the bridegroom used to  
 provide the feast seems to imply that in the writer's own time this  
 was done by the friends of the bride. 11. *when they saw him*]

When the bride's people saw what a dangerous fellow he would be  
 in his cups they thought it well to invite under the name of  
 groomsmen a considerable troop of their own nation. We are told  
 that in the Lebanon to this day the sports at a marriage-feast fre-  
 quently end in quarrels and bloodshed. 12. *riddle*] cp. 1 K.

x. 1; 2 Chr. ix. 1. The word is sometimes used as equivalent to  
 "parable" or "proverb," the idea of obscurity and mystery being  
 prominent (Prov. i. 6; Ezek. xvii. 2; Ps. xlix. 4; lxxviii. 2). The  
 propounding and solving of riddles was, and still is, one of the  
 standing amusements of marriage-feasts in the East. *certainly*]

This word is superfluous and rightly omitted in R.V. *sheets*]

or linen wrappers, probably used as waist-cloths; cp. Isa. iii. 23  
 ("fine linen"); Prov. xxxi. 24 ("she maketh linen garments"); and  
 Mark xiv. 51. *garments*] See viii. 25, note. 15. *seventh*]

LXX. and Syr. have: "on the fourth day,"—certainly with great  
 probability (see ver. 14: "they could not in three days"), and with

us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? *is it not so?*

- 16 And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told *it* me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told *it* my father nor my  
17 mother, and shall I tell *it* thee? And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her  
18 people. And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

What *is* sweeter than honey?

And what *is* stronger than a lion?

And he said unto them,

If ye had not plowed with my heifer,

Ye had not found out my riddle.

- 19 And the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of *garments* unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went  
20 up to his father's house. But Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.  
15 But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of

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the change of only one letter in the Hebrew. *burn thee*] This seems to have been a favourite threat in those rude times; cp. xii. 6; xv. 6. It is characteristic that a menace of the kind (it was seriously meant) did not seem disproportionate to the annoyance of having to contribute each a second-hand (ver. 19) plaid and a second-hand waist-cloth to the wardrobe of the bridegroom.

16. *shall I tell it thee?*] That the relation of husband and wife is less intimate than relations of blood is the common feeling of the Semite East to this day; but a different view of the marriage state is held forth in Gen. ii. 24.

17. *the seven days*] an inexact expression for "the rest of the seven days." *lay sore upon him*] i.e. pressed him sore, as R.V.

18. *before the sun went down*] It is doubtful whether the words can bear this sense. A slight change in the Hebrew would give: "before he went into the chamber" (cp. xv. 1). The Eastern husband is not introduced to the bridal chamber till the close of the last day of the marriage-feast.

19. *came*] See ver. 6. *Ashkelon*] See i. 18. *spoil*] in the sense of the Latin *exuriæ*—the clothes they wore. Cp. 2 Sam. ii. 21, where it is translated "armour."

Heb. "the change", i.e. the promised change.

XV. Samson's revenge upon the Philistines, first for the loss of his wife and afterwards for her murder. His captivity and deliverance. Slaughter of the Philistines at Lehi. The springing of En-hakkore.

wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in. And her father said, <sup>2</sup> I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her. And Samson <sup>3</sup> said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure. And Samson <sup>4</sup> went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, <sup>5</sup> he let *them* go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards *and* olives. Then the Philistines said, Who <sup>6</sup> hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire. And Samson said unto them, <sup>7</sup> Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after *that* I will cease. And he smote them hip and thigh <sup>8</sup> *with* a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

1. *wheat harvest*] In Canaan the "weeks of harvest" (Jer. v. 24) are the seven between Passover and Pentecost, or, as we should say, between Easter and Whitsuntide. The barley harvest comes first; wheat harvest follows. *with a kid*] to make a feast; cp. Gen. xxvii. 9, 14, xxxviii. 17; 1 Sam. xvi. 20; Luke xv. 29; also vi. 19, xiii. 15, above. 3. *Now shall I &c.*] R.V. **This time shall I be blameless in regard of the Philistines when I do them a mischief;** or, perhaps: "I will clear accounts with the Philistines."

4. *foxes*] No one who knows the habits of the fox will underrate the difficulty of capturing three hundred of them, even in a district where they abound. *firebrands*] or "torches;" same word as in vii. 16. Amongst the practices observed in celebrating the Roman Cerealia was that of sending off foxes with flaming torches attached. The legendary origin of the custom (an accidental conflagration arising out of a boy's frolic with a fox) is related by Ovid (*Fæsti* iv. 681 sqq.). *between two tails*] R.V. **between every two tails.** The object of the tying seems to have been to prevent each fox from making straight for its own den. *with*] Heb. "and even."

6. *her father*] Many Hebrew MSS. and also LXX. (A) have: "her father's house," as in xiv. 15.

7. *Though ye &c.*] R.V. **If ye do after this manner surely I will be avenged of you.**

8. *hip and thigh*] a proverbial expression, perhaps derived from wrestling, but the sense has not been clearly made out. *top*] R.V. **cleft;** same word as in Isa. ii. 21, lvii. 5, and different from that in xvi. 3.

*rock Etam*] This lay apparently in the hill-country of Judah; it has not been



- 9 Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and  
 10 spread themselves in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, Why  
 are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind  
 Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.  
 11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the  
 rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the  
 Philistines *are* rulers over us? what *is* this *that* thou hast  
 done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me,  
 12 so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are  
 come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the  
 hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear  
 13 unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. And they  
 spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and  
 deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee.  
 And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him  
 14 up from the rock. And when he came unto Lehi, the Phi-  
 listines shouted against him: and the spirit of the Lord came  
 mightily upon him, and the cords that *were* upon his arms  
 became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed  
 15 from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass,  
 and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men  
 16 therewith. And Samson said,

With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps,

With the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

- 17 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking,

identified, but its locality is perhaps to be sought near the Etam described by Josephus as lying 60 stadia to the S. of Jerusalem, and as having been beautified with gardens and waterworks by Solomon—the mod. Artâs, in the Wady Artâs, which is overhung by barren mountains. It is about half a day's journey from Zorah.

9. *spread themselves*] Comp. 2 Sam. v. 18, 22. The phrase seems to imply a large host and extended camp. *Lehi*] See ver. 17 below. It seems to have been a suitable rendezvous for a Philistine invasion of Judah, for in 2 Sam. xxiii. 11 also we read of an assembling of Philistine armies “at Lehi” (A.V. “into a troop”).

10. *bind*] *i.e.* make prisoner of. 11. *went to the top*] R.V. **went down to the cleft**; cp. vv. 12, 13. 12. *Swear unto me &c.*] He is anxious not to compromise his countrymen with the Philistines, and unwilling, unless in the utmost extremity, to lay violent hands on any of them.

13. *brought him up*] See ver. 11. 14. *came mightily*] See xiv. 6, 19. *loosed*] lit. “melted.”

15. *a new jawbone*] not yet so dried in the sun as to be brittle. *slew a thousand men*] In several Arabian stories the jawbone of a camel serves in like manner as an improvised weapon, but not with such deadly results.

16. *heaps upon heaps*] lit. “an heap, two heaps.” The translation is somewhat precarious. The Hebrew contains a play upon the word for “an



that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi.

And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, <sup>18</sup> Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave a hollow place that *was* <sup>19</sup> in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which *is* in Lehi unto this day. And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines <sup>20</sup> twenty years.

Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there a harlot, and <sup>16</sup> went in unto her. *And it was told* the Gazites, saying, <sup>2</sup> Samson is come hither. And they compassed *him* in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at <sup>3</sup>

ass" (*hamôr*). <sup>17.</sup> *called that place*] or, "and men called that place," Ramath-lehi, *i.e.* "jawbone-height." <sup>18.</sup> *deliverance into*] or, victory by. *uncircumcised*] a common opprobrious

epithet applied by Israel to the Philistines. Most of the nations around Israel appear to have practised circumcision—notably the Ishmaelite Arabs and other descendants of Abraham; also the Egyptians and probably the older races of Canaan, who had long been under Egyptian influence. The Philistines (see iii. 3) were newcomers. <sup>19.</sup> *a hollow place that (was) in the jaw*] R.V.

**The hollow place** [Heb. "mortar"] **that is in Lehi**, *i.e.* the mortar-shaped depression containing the spring of En-hakkore. So the Phœnician quarter of Jerusalem, perhaps occupying the head of the Tyropœon valley, is called "the mortar" (Maktesh); Zeph. i. 11.

*he called*] or "men call." *En-hakkore*] lit. "the fountain of the caller." One might also render "Partridge spring," for the partridge, which abounds on these hills, is named in Hebrew "the caller." In like manner it has been suggested that "the jawbone height" was originally so designated from its configuration, like the promontory on the coast of Laconia in Greece called Onugnathus, *i.e.* "jawbone of an ass." If this be so, the names were adapted to the story in popular tradition.

XVI. Samson at Gaza; in the valley of Sorek; and again at Gaza. His death.

<sup>1.</sup> *Gaza*] See i. 18. Samson's repeated intrigues of this description are very inconsistent with the spirit of Biblical religion; but they form one of the many points of contact between the rude times of the Judges and the heroic period of Arabian heathenism. <sup>2.</sup> *And it was told*] These necessary words are found in LXX. though not in the present Hebrew text. *laid wait for*

*him all night*] To have entered the house where he was by night would have been against custom; see Josh. ii. 3; 1 Sam. xix. 11.

*In the morning &c.*] R.V. [Let be] **till morning light**,

midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put *them* upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of a hill that *is* before Hebron.

- 4 And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in  
 5 the valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah. And the lords  
 of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice  
 him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what  
*means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to  
 afflict him: and we will give thee every one *of us* eleven  
 6 hundred *pieces* of silver. And Delilah said to Samson, Tell  
 me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength *lieth*, and where-  
 7 with thou mightest be bound to afflict thee. And Samson  
 said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that  
 were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another  
 8 man. Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her  
 seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound  
 9 him with them. Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding  
 with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The  
 Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs,  
 as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his  
 10 strength was not known. And Delilah said unto Samson,  
 Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me,  
 11 I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said  
 unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were  
 occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.  
 12 Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith,  
 and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson.

**then we will kill him.**

3. *took the doors &c.*] lit. "laid hold of the folding doors," &c. The fortifications seem to have been somewhat primitive;—perhaps a mud wall, for the doors had posts instead of being swung on sockets in the stone-work.

*a hill*] R.V. **the mountain**,—the sky-line of the "hill-country of Judaea" as seen from Gaza, looking towards Hebron.

*before Hebron*] lit. "in front of," *i.e.* as one comes from Gaza.

4. *in the valley*] Zorah, Mahaneh-dan, Eshtaol, Timnah, were all in this valley.

*Delilah*] It seems to be implied that she was a Philistine.

5. *lords*] See iii. 3, note.

*afflict*] or "humble," *i.e.* bring into weakness and subjection.

7. *withs*] R.V. **withes**. Better: "fresh bow-strings." These were made of gut, and so would become brittle when dry. A.V. follows LXX. (A), and also Josephus, who supposes that the flexible runners of the vine are meant.

9. *Now there were &c.*] Heb. "now the liers in wait were sitting for her [*i.e.* awaiting her signal] in the inner chamber."

*chamber*] Same word as in xv. 1, and in ver. 12, below; see also xiv. 18, note.

*toucheth*] lit. "smelleth."

11. *occupied*] *i.e.* "used." R.V., more literally, **wherewith no**

And *there were* liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread. And Delilah said 13 unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web. And she fastened *it* with the pin, and said unto 14 him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web. And she said unto him, How canst thou 15 say, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*. And it came to pass, when she 16 pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that his soul was vexed unto death; that he told her all his heart, and 17 said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man. And when Delilah 18 saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up *this* once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a 19 man, and she caused *him* to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, 20 Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times *before*, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. But the Philistines 21

**work hath been done.**

**13.** *the web*] or, more precisely, the "warp," Samson's long hair forming the woof.

**14.** *fastened (it) with the pin*] or, perhaps, "tapped with the pin" (as a signal).

What the "pin" here means is not clearly made out. A sort of pin or wooden spatula was used by the ancients instead of the modern lay-cap to push the woof home and make the web firm; and the first clause of the verse has been supposed to refer to this operation. On the other hand the "pin of the beam" in the second clause seems to be some fixed portion of the loom which Samson tore away; but here the translation and even the reading are questionable.

**16.** *pressed him*] Cp. xiv. 17 (same word). **17.** *if I be shaven*] The inviolate hair, "the head of his separation" (or, "consecration"), Nu. vi. 7, 9, 18, was the most essential feature in the Nazarite's vow. It was to be shaved only when the days of his consecration were at an end (Nu. vi. 13).

**18.** *money*] Heb. "the (promised) money."

**19.** *caused him to shave off*] Heb. "she shaved off;" perhaps we should read, with a change of one letter: "and he shaved off." *began to afflict him*] i.e. "humbled"



- took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind  
 22 in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow *again* after he was shaven.
- 23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our  
 24 enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which  
 25 slew many of us. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between  
 26 the pillars. And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon  
 27 the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson  
 28 made sport. And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once  
 29 avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house

(see ver. 5) him for the first time. 21. *put out his eyes*] a very common mutilation both in ancient and mediæval times. Cp. 1 Sam. xi. 2; 2 K. xxv. 7. *did grind*] Grinding with a hand-mill was menial work (Isa. xlvii. 2), usually assigned to women (Ex. xi. 5; Mt. xxiv. 41). It is possible that Samson may have been employed at one of the larger description of mills ("ass mills:" cp. Mt. xviii. 6; Luke xvii. 2; Rev. xviii. 21, 22) for which greater strength was required.

23. *Dagon*] the chief god of the Philistine confederation; comp. 1 Sam. v. 2 sqq.; 1 Chr. xx. 10; 1 Macc. x. 83 sqq., xi. 4). It is commonly inferred from 1 Sam. v. 4 that he was figured with the body of a fish but the hands and face of a man. His worship was not peculiar to the Philistines; it has been conjectured to be identical with that of the Babylonian god Dakan.

25. *sport*] Apparently he was called upon to make some exhibition of his agility or strength. 25, 26. *the pillars...the house*] "The house" is presumably not the temple itself but a banqueting house (*lishkah*) attached to it, such as was also found at the sanctuary of Ramah (1 Sam. ix. 22: A.V. "parlour"; R.V. "guest-chamber"). It was so large that the roof was supported by a row of pillars.

27. *three thousand*] LXX. (B) "seven hundred." Variations in numbers of this kind are frequent in the text of the Old Testament, and the commoner tendency of copyists was to exaggerate.



stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed *himself* with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were *more* than *they* which he slew in his life. Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son. And when he had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in

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PART III. Chap. XVII. 1—XXI. 25. TWO APPENDICES: (A) MICAH AND THE SANCTUARY OF DAN; (B) GIBEAH AND THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.

*Appendix A.* Ch. XVII., XVIII. Micah's sanctuary in the hill-country of Ephraim, and how it was transferred against his will to Dan. Apart from a few editorial notes and comments (such as xvii. 6, xviii. 12 *b*, xviii. 30, 31), and perhaps one longer passage (xvii. 2—4), the whole forms one continuous narrative.

1. *mount*] *i.e.* "hill-country of." *Micah*] or, more fully (here and in ver. 4), *Micayahu*, *i.e.* "who is like Jehovah," essentially the same word as the name Michael ("who is like God?"). A third form of the name is *Micaiah* (1 K. xxii. 8, and elsewhere). This Micah was a Jehovah-worshipper, as his name shows, though his sanctuary contained images; *cp.* above, viii. 27. 2. *about which &c.*] R.V. **about which thou didst utter a curse** [*marg.* "an adjuration"] **and didst also speak it in mine ears.** The ancient belief was that such curses came home to the guilty party. *I took it*] Add here, from end of ver. 3, the displaced clause: "now therefore I will restore it unto thee." *Blessed be thou &c.*] removing the curse.

3. *I had wholly dedicated*] Heb. "I do dedicate." *from my hand*] *i.e.* "from my possession." *now therefore &c.*] This clause should be transferred to ver. 2.

4. *Yet he &c.*] R.V. **And when he...his mother took.** In substance a repetition of ver. 3. *and they were*] Heb., as R.V., **"and it was."** This seems to suggest that we are to under-

- 5 the house of Micah. And the man Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but every man did that which was right* in his own eyes.
- 7 And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah of the family of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he sojourned there.
- 8 And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah to sojourn where he could find *a place*: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, *I am* a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where
- 10 I may find *a place*. And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee

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stand not two images but a single figure of carved wood adorned with metal work. Yet in xviii. 17, 18, the graven and molten images seem to be distinct. The narrative does not enable us to form a precise notion of the furniture of Micah's shrine. 5. In point of form this verse seems to attach itself to ver. 1 rather than to ver. 4, and many critics regard verses 2—4 as an insertion in the original text. *a house of gods*] or "of God," *i.e.* a temple.

*ephod*] See viii. 27, note. *teraphim*] See 1 Sam. xix. 13—16 (R.V.), xv. 23 (R.V.); 2 K. xxiii. 24 (R.V.); Hos. iii. 4; Zech. x. 2 (R.V.). The etymology of the word is obscure. It is applied to a kind of images, with something of a human figure (1 Sam. xix. 13), used in domestic and public worship, and especially associated with the arts of divination (Zech. x. 2; Ezek. xxi. 21 (R.V.)). The last-cited passage shows that teraphim were used in Babylonia also. Ephod and teraphim were a standing part of the furniture of a sanctuary in the time of Hosea (iii. 4), and both seem to have been used in consulting the sacred oracle; see 1 Sam. xiv. 18 (R.V. marg.: "bring hither the ephod"); 1 Sam. xxiii. 9. *consecrated*] or "installed;" Heb. "filled the hands of." *one of his sons*] Cp. Ex. xxiv. 5 where, prior to the institution of a regular priesthood, sacrifices are offered by the young men of the children of Israel.

7. *Beth-lehem-judah*] Cp. xii. 8, note. It is the mod. Bêt-lahm, 5 m. S. from Jerusalem. *of the family of Judah*] The words are a note on Beth-lehem-judah; the Heb. consonants (cp. Josh. vii. 17) admit the easier rendering: "one of the demes [or "cantons"] of Judah;" see LXX. (B). *sojourned*] *i.e.* lived among the Judaeans as a stranger under their protection. The Levites had no tribal inheritance (Dt. xviii. 1), but lived scattered through the land (Dt. xviii. 6); compare the prediction (Gen. xlix. 7).

10. *a father*] See also xviii. 19; the first instance of the bestowal of this title of honour on a priest. It is now common throughout Christendom; examples are the Syriac *abba*, whence *abbat*, *abbot*, and the Greek and Latin *papa* or *pope*, a title borne in the Greek Church by every parish priest. The designation "father" was also borne by prophets (2 K. vi. 21, xiii. 14) and governors (Isa. xxii. 21; Gen.

ten *shekels* of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went *in*. And the Levite was <sup>11</sup> content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; <sup>12</sup> and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do <sup>13</sup> me good, seeing I have a Levite to *my* priest.

In those days *there was* no king in Israel; and in those days <sup>18</sup> the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell *in*; for unto that day *all their* inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. And the children of Dan sent <sup>2</sup> of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. When they *were* by the house of Micah, they knew the <sup>3</sup> voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this *place*? and what hast thou here? And he said <sup>4</sup> unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest. And they said unto him, Ask <sup>5</sup>

xlv. 8). *ten [shekels] of silver*] See note on ix. 4. We are to understand that the salary was liberal. For the purchasing power of silver in old Israel the following passages may be compared: Ex. xxi. 32 (30 shekels a fair price for a slave); Dt. xxii. 29 (50 shekels the "dowry" to be paid in certain circumstances for a wife); Judg. ix. 4; 1 Sam. ix. 8 (a quarter of a shekel a suitable present for a prophet); 2 K. vii. 1 (one seah, or three ephahs, of fine flour for a shekel, and two seals of barley for a shekel in time of plenty).

*suit*] not the same word as "a change" (xiv. 6). <sup>11.</sup> *one of his sons*] *i.e.* was treated as a member of the family. <sup>12.</sup> *consecrated*] See ver. 5. <sup>13.</sup> In all early religions great weight is laid on the correct performance of ritual functions. Among the Hebrews the Levitical priests were the special depositaries of ritual tradition (Dt. xxxiii. 10; Mal. ii. 7, 8).

XVIII. 1. *all their inheritance*] The inserted "all" of A.V. is unnecessary and incorrect. The Danites were at this time striving to make good their hold of the region that seemed to have fallen to their lot (see Josh. xix. 40), but without success (see above, i. 34). They appear to have held little more than the two towns of Zorah and Eshtaol (cp. vv. 2, 11, below).

<sup>2.</sup> *family*] see xiii. 2. *note.* *from their coasts*] R.V. **from their whole number**, *i.e.* representing all parts of the tribe. *lodged there*] passed the night; not as Micah's guests; see next verse. <sup>3.</sup> *knew the voice*] Bethlehem, the Levite's former residence, is less than a day's march from the Danite settlements; cp. xv. 8, *note.* *what makest thou*] in modern English: "what are you doing here?" *what hast thou*] *i.e.* what business. <sup>5.</sup> *ask*



- counsel*, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our  
 6 way which we go shall be prosperous. And the priest said unto  
 them, Go in peace: before the LORD *is* your way wherein ye  
 7 go. Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw  
 the people that *were* therein, how they dwelt careless, after the  
 manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and *there was* no  
 magistrate in the land, that might put *them* to shame in *any*  
 thing; and they *were* far from the Zidonians, and had no  
 8 business with *any* man. And they came unto their brethren  
 to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them,  
 9 What *say* ye? And they said, Arise, that we may go up against  
 them: for we have seen the land, and behold, it *is* very good:  
 and *are* ye still? be not slothful to go, *and* to enter to possess  
 10 the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and  
 to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place  
 where *there is* no want of any thing that *is* in the earth.  
 11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites,

*counsel*] viz. by ephod and teraphim; see above, xvii. 5. 6.

*the priest said*] after having consulted the oracle for them.

*before the LORD*] i.e., countenanced by him. Conversely, Jehovah is said to "hide his eyes" from what is displeasing to Him (Isa. i. 15; cp. Isa. xxxiii. 15). The curse of Cain is that he is to be hidden from the face of Jehovah (Gen. iv. 14).

7. *Laish*] mod. Tell el-Kâdy (Arab. "hill of the judge;" cp. Hebr. *dan*, "judge"), now an extensive mound, overgrown with brushwood, at the western foot of which rises a considerable stream, el-Leddân, the largest of the three branches which go to form the Jordan. The Tell lies about 500 feet above sea-level, in lat. 33° 15' N. and commands the rich plain of the Hûleh ("the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob;" ver. 28). See Gen. xiv. 14; 1 K. xii. 28—30; xv. 20; 2 Chr. xvi. 4.

*careless*] R.V. **in security**. *manner of the Zidonians*] The Phoenicians, protected on one side by the sea and on the other by Mount Lebanon, were exempt from the constant feuds to which most of the petty Canaanites were exposed. But perhaps it is implied that the men of Laish were a merchant community like the Zidonians, or even a Phoenician colony. Their city lay on the great trade route between Damascus and the Phoenician coast, and the last clause of the verse seems to imply that they might have expected succour from the Zidonians had there been time to bring it.

*no magistrate in the land*] R.V. **none in the land possessing authority** (marg. "power of restraint"). The whole clause is obscure. The general sense seems to be that they had no foreign oppressor to fear, unless indeed the text is corrupt, and originally ran (as many critics suppose) nearly as the last clause of ver. 10. *business*] Heb. "word." The special sense here required seems to be "alliance;" see ver. 28. The phrase certainly does not exclude the supposition that they were a commercial people.

11. *family*] see xiii. 2,



out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed *with* weapons of war. And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day: behold, *it is* behind Kirjath-jearim. And they passed thence *unto* mount Ephraim, and came unto 13 the house of Micah. Then answered the five men that went 14 to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do. And they turned thitherward, 15 and came to the house of the young man the Levite, *even unto* the house of Micah, and saluted him. And the six hundred 16 men appointed *with* their weapons of war, which *were* of the children of Dan, stood *by* the entering of the gate. And the 17 five men that went to spy out the land went up, *and* came in thither, *and* took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood *in* the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed *with* weapons of war. And these went *into* Micah's 18

note. *six hundred men*] This is not an expedition, but a migration; see ver. 21. The Danites who remained were probably not numerous, and were ultimately absorbed in the tribe of Judah, to which Zorah and Eshtaol are reckoned in Josh. xv. 33.

*appointed*] R.V. **girt**. 12. *Kirjath-jearim*] in Judah, also called Kirjath, Baalah, or Kirjath-baal (Josh. xv. 9, 60; 1 Chr. xiii. 6), the mod. Karyet el-'Enab ("town of grapes"), lies at a height of 2385 feet above sea-level,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  m. W. by N. from Jerusalem, and about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  E. by N. (up the W. Ghurab) from Eshtaol.

*Mahaneh-dan*] This topographical note on Mahaneh-dan presents some difficulty. In xiii. 25 that place is said to lie between Zorah and Eshtaol, *i.e.* at least 7 or 8 m. from Kirjath-jearim and in the very heart of the Danite territory. *behind*] *i.e.* to the west of.

14. *answered*] or rather "took up speech," exactly like "then up spake" in the old ballads.

*in these houses*] Micah was a wealthy man with many dependants, and therefore his dwelling consisted of a complex of houses, surrounded with a wall and gate; see ver. 17. *consider*] a delicate hint. 15. *saluted*] R.V.

**asked him of his welfare**. The usual Hebrew salutation (see 2 K. iv. 26) was: "Is it well with thee?" 16. *stood by the*

*entering of the gate*] in conversation with the priest (or Levite), according to ver. 17, as translated in A.V. 17. *in thither*]

viz. into Micah's house (of gods) according to ver. 18. *graven image, and the ephod*] Hebr. "graven image of the ephod."

*with the six hundred men*] The Hebrew can hardly bear this sense. There is some corruption in the text. 18. *and these &c.*]

Heb. "now these [*i.e.* according to ver. 17a, the five spies] were gone into Micah's house" &c. The proceedings in vv. 15—18 are not very clear even in the English, which itself glosses some diffi-

house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them,  
 19 What do ye? And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: *is it* better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a  
 20 family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went  
 21 in the midst of the people. So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.  
 22 And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that *were* in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered  
 23 ed together, and overtook the children of Dan. And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such  
 24 a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what *is* this *that* ye say unto me, What aileth  
 25 thee? And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and  
 26 thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they *were* too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his  
 27 house. And they took *the things* which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people *that were* at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge  
 28 of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. And *there was* no deliverer, because it *was* far from Zidon, and they had no business with *any* man; and it was in the valley that *lieth* by Beth-

culties of the Hebrew. A reconstruction of the text has been proposed, according to which the five spies hold their acquaintance the Levite in talk while the armed men enter the temple and carry off the sacred objects.

19. *tribe...family*] here synonymous; see xiii. 2, note.

20. *he took*] It was proper that the sacred objects should be carried by the priest (cp. Josh. iii. 3; 1 Sam. xiv. 18, &c.).

21. *the carriage*] in modern English: "the baggage." Cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 22; Isa. x. 28; Acts xxi. 15. *before them*] anticipating pursuit and an attack from the rear.

22. *the houses*] inhabited by Micah's dependants; compare "household" (ver. 25).

23. *comest with such a company*] lit. "art gathered together." Here and in ver. 25 there is a grim touch of humour in the Danites' affectation of innocence.

25. *angry fellows*] Heb. "men bitter of soul"; 2 Sam. xvii. 8: "chafed in their minds."

27. *a people quiet*, as in ver. 7. *Beth-rehob*] Unidentified, the seat of one of the small Aramaic kingdoms at the base of Mount Hermon (2 Sam. x. 6), also called Rehob (2 Sam. x. 8; Nu. xiii. 21). The present note defining the

rehab. And they built a city, and dwelt therein, and they called 29 the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city *was* Laish at the first. And the children of Dan set up the graven 30 image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's 31 graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in 19

situation of Dan by reference to another place was probably added after the destruction of that city; cp. ver. 30. *built a city]*

better: "rebuilt the city." 30. *set up]* Heb. "set up for themselves," *i.e.* as an object of worship. Henceforward Dan grew in importance as an Israelitic sanctuary, and it obtained special state recognition from king Jeroboam (1 K. xii. 28), who placed here one of his calves of gold. Note that the sanctuary of Dan, like that at Jerusalem, is constituted by the transference to it of certain sacred objects; the origin of most Hebrew holy places is traced to a theophany or divine manifestation. *Jonathan]* We here

learn for the first time the name of Micah's Levite. *Manasseh]* The true reading of the Hebrew seems to be "Moses" (as R.V.), who was father of Gershom (Ex. ii. 22; xviii. 3). In the Massoretic text a suspended N is inserted thus—M<sup>s</sup>SHH, changing the consonants of "Moses" (MoSHeH) into those of "Manasseh" (MeNaSH-[SH]eH). The suspended N in the archetype of our Hebrew copies seems to be due to the scruple of a transcriber who felt sure that no grandson of Moses could possibly have undertaken the function here described. Of course "son of Gershom" may mean grandson or other descendant, so that the expression does not help us to fix the date of the foundation of the sanctuary at Dan. *captivity of the land]* either the captivity of 734 B.C., when Tiglath-pileser depopled Galilee and the districts to the north (2 K. xv. 29), or that of 722 B.C., when Samaria was taken and the kingdom of Israel finally destroyed (2 K. xviii. 9): the latter is most probably meant.

31. *Shiloh]* quite a different date from that in the preceding verse. The temple at Shiloh seems to have been destroyed soon after the battle of Eben-ezer and the capture of the ark (1 Sam. iv. 10, 11; cp. Jer. vii. 12, 14). In the time of Saul Eli's descendants are no longer at Shiloh but at Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 1; xxii. 11, 19). Vv. 30 and 31 cannot be by the same hand, and we have here a clear example of the way in which notes and comments were added from time to time to Biblical narratives.

*Appendix B.* Chap. XIX.—XXI. How the iniquity of Gibeah had almost led to the extermination of the tribe of Benjamin, and how this calamity for Israel was averted.

The story seems to have been told in more than one form: note the repetitions in xix. 9, 12b and 13, and especially in ch. xx. The narrative in its present shape is manifestly of a very late date.



Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah. And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there four whole months. And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, *and* to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him *into* her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there. And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, Comfort thine heart *with* a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way. And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry. And when the man rose up to depart, his father in law urged him: therefore he lodged there again. And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them. And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold now, the day draweth towards evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home. But the man would not tarry *that*

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The early history of Benjamin would at all times be listened to with interest in connection with the fact that Saul, the first king of Israel, sprang from that tribe. From the days of the prophet Hosea onwards no favourable impression of the reign or antecedents of Saul was cherished; see Hos. ix. 9 ("they have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah"), and Hos. x. 9 ("O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah").

XIX. The Levite and his concubine.

1. *sojourning*] cp. xvii. 7, note. *on the side of*] The Heb. means rather: "in a remote corner." *concubine*] presumably by purchase from her father; cp. Ex. xxi. 7 sqq. *Beth-lehem-judah*] see xvii. 7; xii. 8, note. 3. *friendly*] R.V. **kindly**; lit. "to her heart." *she brought him*] LXX. (A) has "he came to." 5. *Comfort thine heart*] a true picture of the importunity of Oriental hospitality. 8. *and they tarried &c.*] R.V. **and tarry ye until the day declineth.** *both of them*] The woman does not sit at the table with the men. So still, in the East, the women generally serve the men, eating afterwards by



night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which *is* Jerusalem; and *there were* with him two asses saddled, his concubine also *was* with him. And when they <sup>11</sup> *were* by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. And his master <sup>12</sup> said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that *is* not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah. And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us <sup>13</sup> draw near to one of *these* places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah. And they passed on and went *their way*; and <sup>14</sup> the sun went down upon them *when they were* by Gibeah, which *belongeth* to Benjamin. And they turned aside thither, <sup>15</sup> to go in *and* to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for *there was* no man that took them into *his* house to lodging.

And behold, there came an old man from his work out of <sup>16</sup> the field at even, which *was* also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place *were* Benjamites. And when he had lift up his eyes, he saw a <sup>17</sup> wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? And he <sup>18</sup> said unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence *am* I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I am *now* going to the house of the

themselves.

**10.** *Jebus, which is Jerusalem*] See i. 8; also

below, ver. 12. **11.** *far spent*] The journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem is usually reckoned at about 2 hours.

**12.** *Gibeah*] mod. Tell el-Fûl, 3 m. N. of Jerusalem; it was one of the principal towns of the Benjamites (ver. 14, &c.). It is the "Gibeah of Saul" of the Books of Samuel, where also it is once (1 Sam. x. 5) called "the hill [*Gibeah*] of God."

**13.** *one of these places to lodge*] Heb. "one of the [*neighbouring*] places to lodge."

*Ramah*] see iv. 5, note.

**14.** *by Gibeah*] The main road passes under the hill of Gibeah and does not enter the town.

**15.** *and when he went in &c.*] R.V. **and he went in and sat him down** &c. *a street*] R.V. **the street**; cp. Gen. xix. 2.

The open public place, most probably at the gate, is intended. In those early days there were no public khans or caravanserais, and, unless private hospitality was offered, the passing traveller had no other way of availing himself of the shelter and protection of the "city." The contingency was one against which the traveller was always provided; nor was the hardship excessive. People in that climate are accustomed to sleep on the ground and in the open air; and our Levite had with him a supply of all that was necessary (see ver. 19),—straw and provender for the asses, and bread and wine for himself and his two fellow-travellers.

**18.** *to the house of the Lord*] If the reading is correct this would be an un-

- 19 LORD; and there *is* no man that receiveth me to house. Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man *which is* with thy servants: *there is* no want  
 20 of any thing. And the old man said, Peace *be* with thee; howsoever *let* all thy wants *lie* upon me; only lodge not in the  
 21 street. So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and  
 22 drink. Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, *and* beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that  
 23 came into thine house, that we may know him. And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, *nay*, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do  
 24 not this folly. Behold, *here is* my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but  
 25 unto this man do not so vile a thing. But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought *her* forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to  
 26 spring, they let her go. Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down *at* the door of the man's  
 27 house where her lord *was*, till it was light. And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and behold, the woman his concubine *was* fallen down *at* the door of the house, and her hands *were*  
 28 upon the threshold. And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her *up* upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place.  
 29 And when he was come into his house, he took a knife,

truth, uttered to create sympathy. But LXX. is perhaps right in reading "to my house." 19. *provender*] i.e. fodder, from Lat.

*præbenda*, "things to be supplied." *bread and wine*] see Gen. xiv. 18.

21. *provender*] Heb. "mixed fodder," as distinguished from mere chopped straw. Even the asses were treated well. *washed their feet*] To supply this refreshment is one of

the duties of a good host (Gen. xviii. 4; Luke vii. 44). 22.

*sons of Belial*] R.V. marg. "base fellows"; lit. "sons of worthlessness." The word Belial is never a proper name in Hebrew; the expression is an idiom for which there are many parallels, such as "son of affliction" for an afflicted person (Prov. xxxi. 6 marg.), "son of possession" for possessor (Gen. xv. 2, R.V.), "son of oil" for very fruitful (Isa. v. 1). 25. *took his concubine*] R.V. **laid**

and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, *together* with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such *deed* done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak *your minds*.

Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh. And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword. (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.) Then said the children of Israel, Tell us, how was this wickedness? And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that *belongeth* to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced, that she is

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**hold of.** 29. *together with her bones*] R.V. **limb by limb**; lit. "according to her bones." *into all the coasts*] R.V. **throughout all their borders**; cp. 1 Sam. xi. 7 sqq.

XX. The punishment of Benjamin.

1. *the congregation*] Heb, '*edah*', the word used in later parts of the Old Testament for the national assembly of all Israel as a religious community. It is hardly used by any historical writer prior to the restoration from Babylon. *Dan*] or Laish; see xviii. 7, note.

*Beer-sheba*] mod. Bîr es-Seba, on the W. es-Seba, 28 m. S.W. from Hebron, in about 31° 10' N. lat. "From Dan to Beer-sheba" is a standing expression for the whole land of Israel. The distance in a direct line is rather over 140 miles.

*Gilead*] here used as in Nu. xxxii. 29, Dt. xxxiv. 1, Josh. xxii. 9, 1 K. iv. 19, in the largest sense, to denote the whole of Eastern Palestine from the Arnon to Mt. Hermon, as distinguished from Canaan proper. In the narrower sense Gilead as distinguished from Bashan lay south of the Yarmûk.

*Mizpeh*] or Mizpah, mod. Neby Samwil, 2935 feet above sea-level, on a conspicuous site 4½ m. N.W. from Jerusalem. It was the meeting-place of the assemblies called by Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 5; x. 17). See also 1 K. xv. 22; 2 K. xxv. 23; Jer. xl. 6; Neh. iii. 7, 19). It is of course to be distinguished from Mizpeh of Gilead; see above, x. 17, note.

2. *chief*] R.V. **chiefs**; lit. "corner-stones." The same word is used in 1 Sam. xiv. 38; Isa. xix. 13 ("the corner-stone of her tribes" R.V.); Zech. x. 4 ("from him shall come forth the corner stone"). *four hundred thousand*] Compare the 40,000 of ver. 8, above, and the 30,000 chosen men of Israel in David's time (2 Sam. vi. 1). Here we have an average of exactly 40,000 to each tribe,



- 6 dead. And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel.
- 7 Behold, ye *are* all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel. And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any of *us* go to his tent, neither will we any of *us* turn into his house. But now this *shall be* the thing which
- 10 we will do to Gibeah; *we will go up* by lot against it; and we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that *they* may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to
- 11 all the folly that they have wrought in Israel. So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man.
- 12 And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness *is* this that is done among
- 13 you? Now therefore deliver *us* the men, the children of Belial, which *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of
- 14 Israel: but the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle
- 15 against the children of Israel. And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, *which* were numbered seven hundred chosen men.
- 16 Among all this people *there were* seven hundred chosen men left-handed; every one could sling stones at a hair *breadth*,
- 17 and not miss. And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these *were* men of war.

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Benjamin and Levi being of course excluded. 8. *tent...house*] synonymous; cp. vii. 8.

9, 10. The Hebrew of these verses is difficult and the text seems to be in some disorder. It is not clear whether we are to understand, with A.V., that the lot was used to choose men to victual the host, or that a certain number of warriors were chosen by lot to do the actual fighting.

10. *Gibeah*] the Heb. text has *Geba*, but this is obviously a mistake for Gibeah. *Geba*, mod. *Jeb'a*, was also a Benjamite town, about 3 m. N.E. from Gibeah.

11. *the city*] i.e. Gibeah. 12. *tribe*] lit. "tribes"; cp. 1 Sam. ix. 21 (R.V. marg.). *is done*] i.e. hath been done.

13. *put away evil*] by punishment. Cp. Dt. xiii. 5; xvii. 12; xxii. 22.

15. *twenty and six*] LXX. (A) and Vulg. have "twenty and five;" cp. ver. 35. 16. *left-handed*] Cp. above, iii. 15. Ambidextrous warriors are spoken of in

1 Chr. xii. 2, but the phrase here does not admit of such an interpre-



And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house 18 of God, and asked *counsel* of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah *shall go up* first. And the children 19 of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah. And the men of Israel went out to battle against 20 Benjamin; and the men of Israel put *themselves* in array to fight against them at Gibeah. And the children of Benjamin 21 came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed *down* to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men. And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and 22 set *their* battle again in array in the place where they put *themselves* in array the first day. (And the children of Israel 23 went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked *counsel* of the LORD, saying, Shall I go *up* again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.) And the children of Israel came 24 near against the children of Benjamin the second day. And 25 Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed *down* to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword. Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, 26 went up, and came *unto* the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

tation. 18. *to the house of God*] R.V. to **Bethel** (and so vv. 26, 31; xxi. 2). Etymologically Bethel means "house of God," but the name is never applied to other sanctuaries, *e.g.* Shiloh, which seems to have been in the mind of our translators. The ark (see vv. 27, 28) was at this time at Bethel. *Judah first*] Cp. i. 2.

22, 23. These verses ought to be transposed. 23. *before the LORD*] *i.e.* before the ark, at Bethel; cp. ii. 1, LXX.

*Benjamin my brother*] The common sentiment of antiquity was that war against kinsfolk was impious. The Israelites seek an assurance that their defeat has not arisen from this cause. 25. *eighteen thousand men*] These, with the 22,000 in ver. 21, make a total of 40,000,—a tenth of the whole armed force of Israel (ver. 2). As appears from the sequel, the losses of Benjamin up to this point have been (practically) nil.

26. *the children of Israel*] *i.e.* the combatants. *and all the people*] *i.e.* the non-combatants,—old men, women and children. *burnt offerings*] Offerings in which the whole carcase of the victim was consumed on the altar. In old Israel they occurred comparatively seldom and had special significance as atoning sacrifices (Mic. iv. 6, 7; 1 Sam. vii. 9; Job i. 5).

*peace offerings*] Heb. *shelamim*, as distinguished from burnt offerings, were sacrifices of which the flesh was consumed by the worshippers in a sacrificial feast after the blood and the fat had

27 And the children of Israel inquired of the LORD, (for the ark  
 28 of the covenant of God *was* there in those days, and Phinehas,  
 the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those  
 days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the  
 children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the  
 LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into  
 29 thine hand. And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah.  
 30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of  
 Benjamin on the third day, and put *themselves* in array  
 31 against Gibeah, as at other times. And the children of Ben-  
 jamin went out against the people, *and* were drawn away  
 from the city; and they began to smite of the people, *and*  
 kill, as at other times, in the highways, *of* which one goeth  
 up *to* the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field,  
 32 about thirty men of Israel. And the children of Benjamin  
 said, They *are* smitten down before us, as at the first. But  
 the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from  
 33 the city unto the highways. And all the men of Israel rose  
 up out of their place, and put *themselves* in array at Baal-  
 tamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their

been offered on the altar.

27. *the ark of the covenant*] The ark (or chest) of the covenant is described in Ex. xxv. 10—16; xxxvii. 1—5 (where read “acacia” for “shittim” and “feet” for “corners”). Cp. also Ex. xl. 20, where we read that Moses placed within the sacred chest “the testimony,” *i.e.* the two tables of stone containing the words of the covenant; see 1 K. viii. 9. Hence it is indifferently called “the ark of the testimony” and “the ark of the covenant.” Its oldest name, as we gather from the books of Samuel and the more ancient parts of the Hexateuch, seems to have been “the ark of Jehovah.”

28. *Phinehas, the son of Eleazar*] See Nu. xxv. 7 sqq.; Josh. xxii. 13 sqq. This would fix the date of these occurrences as belonging to the age immediately following that of Joshua, and before the time of Ehud.

*stood before*] A usual expression for the attitude of service; see Gen. xli. 46; 1 K. i. 28; x. 8; Dan. i. 5; 1 K. xvii. 1; xviii. 15; Deut. x. 8. To stand before Jehovah is one of the peculiar functions of the priesthood; Ezek. xlv. 13, 15; Jer. xxxiii. 18, 21, 22.

29. *round about*] except, of course, on the side from which the open attack was made.

31. *house of God*] *i.e.* Bethel, as above.

*to Gibeah in the field*] or “through the field.” The first “highway” is probably the main road from Jerusalem to Bethel, one of the chief highways of Palestine, which passes under the hill of Gibeah and westward of the town; the second will then be a branch leading from the main road to the town; cp. xix. 14.

33. *Baal-tamar*] Identified in the *Onomastica* with a hamlet called in those days Beth-tamar, quite near Gibeah. Its exact position is unknown. The name means “Baal of the palm tree;”

places, *even* out of the meadows of Gibeah. And there came 34  
against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel,  
and the battle was sore: but they knew not that evil *was*  
near them. And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: 35  
and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that  
day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these  
drew the sword.

So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten: 36  
for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because  
they trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set beside  
Gibeah. And the liers in wait hasted, and rushed upon 37  
Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew *themselves* along, and  
smote all the city with the edge of the sword. Now there 38  
was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers  
in wait, that they should make a great flame with smoke rise  
up out of the city. And when the men of Israel retired in 39  
the battle, Benjamin began to smite *and* kill of the men of  
Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are  
smitten down before us, as *in* the first battle. But when the 40  
flame began to arise up out of the city *with* a pillar of smoke,  
the Benjamites looked behind them, and behold, the flame of  
the city ascended up to heaven. And when the men of Israel 41  
turned *again*, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they  
saw that evil was come upon them. Therefore they turned 42  
*their backs* before the men of Israel unto the way of the  
wilderness; but the battle overtook them; and them which

cp. above, iv. 5. *the meadows of Gibeah*] Heb. *Maareh-geba*.  
The word *ma'areh* occurs only here, and the translation is exceed-  
ingly precarious. LXX. (A), with a slight change of the Hebrew,  
has: "to the west of Gibeah."

34. *there came against*] or  
rather, as in R.V.; **there came over against**, that is, in open  
battle, taking up the whole attention of the Benjamites. *near*  
*them*] lit. "touching them."

35. The open battle thus an-  
nihilated the entire force of Benjamin (see ver. 15), save 1600, or,  
on the other reading of ver. 15, save 600 men. Compare ver. 46,  
which gives 25,000 as the number of slain, and 600 as survivors.

36—46. These verses give a second account of the destruction  
of the Benjamites with some variation in detail, and a remarkable  
similarity to the account of the taking of Ai in Josh. viii.

37. *drew themselves along*] i.e. drew on. 38. *flame*] R.V.  
**cloud**, and so ver. 40.

40. *flame...with a pillar*] R.V. **cloud**  
**...in a pillar.** *the flame of the city*] R.V. **the whole of the**  
**city went up** [in smoke] **to heaven.** 41. *was come*] lit.

"touched" (as ver. 34). 42. *the wilderness*] fleeing in a  
north-easterly direction; see ver. 45. The whole eastern versant  
of the mountains of Benjamin is wild and barren. *them which*  
*came &c.*] The translators assume that the cities referred to are the



- came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them.
- 43 Thus they inclosed the Benjamites round about, and chased them, and trode them down with ease over against Gibeah toward the sunrising. And there fell of Benjamin eighteen
- 44 thousand men; all these *were* men of valour. And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom,
- 46 and slew two thousand men of them. So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these *were* men of valour. But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months. And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of *every* city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.
- 21 Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife.
- 2 And the people came to the house of God, and abode there till
- 3 even before God, and lift up their voices, and wept sore; and

Benjamite cities, still held by Benjamites. R.V. has **they which came out of the cities destroyed them**, the meaning in this case being that the "cities" north and east of Gibeah were already in Israelite hands. Neither translation corresponds satisfactorily to the present Hebrew, which is probably corrupt. 43. *with ease*] R.V. at [their] **resting place**; marg., "at Menuhah."

The text is still defective. *toward the sunrising*] i.e. toward the wilderness. 44. *eighteen thousand*] i.e. in the principal action; see next verse. 45. *Rimmon*] This rock is defined by Eusebius as 15 R. m. from Jerusalem, and has been identified with considerable certainty as corresponding to the modern Rammûn, situated on and around the summit of a conspicuous chalky hill 3½ m. E. from Bethel, and 8½ m. N.N.E. from Gibeah, in the wilderness of Benjamin. *gleaned*] cp. viii. 2. *Gidom*] Unknown. Presumably between Gibeah and Rimmon. 46. *twenty and five thousand*] Cp. vv. 15, 45. 48. *as well the men of every city as*] R.V. **both the entire city and**. The text is obscure, and A.V. involves at least a change in the pointing of the Hebrew. *came to hand*] lit. "was found." *all the cities*] The entire Benjamite population had been laid under the ban (cp. Dt. ii. 34). In the general destruction all the women even, marriageable and married alike, had been put to the sword (xxi. 16).

XXI. How wives were got for the six hundred surviving Benjamites.

1. *had sworn*] Cp. ver. 18. *Mizpeh*] See xx. 1, note. 2. *the house of God*] R.V. **Bethel**. *abode*] R.V. **sat**, as in xx. 26. *wept sore*] Between the deeds related in xx. 48, and in xxi. 11, such



said, O LORD God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one tribe lacking in Israel? And 4 it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the children of Israel said, Who *is there* 5 among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? For *they* had made a great oath concerning *him* that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death. And the children of 6 Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel *this* day. How shall we 7 do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that *we* will not give them of our daughters to wives? And they said, What one *is there* of the tribes of 8 Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And behold, there came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly. For the people were numbered, and behold, *there* 9 *were* none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there. And 10 the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. And this *is* the thing that ye 11 shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lien by man. And they found among the 12 inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with *any* male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which *is* in the land

tenderness of feeling is surprising.

Every sanctuary had an altar, but not necessarily an altar sufficient for a great national sacrifice.

*offerings*] cp. xx. 26.

4. *built there an altar*] *burnt offerings and peace offerings*] cp. xx. 26.

5. *with the congregation*] R.V. in the

assembly. So also in ver. 8, as in xx. 2.

8. *Jabesh-gilead*] an important town (Josephus calls it the metropolis) of Gilead.

According to Eusebius it lay on the eastern tableland, 6 R. m. from Pella on the road to Gerasa. According to 1 Sam. xxxi. 12 it was

within a night's march from Beth-shean. The name appears to survive in the W. Yâbis, an eastern tributary of the Jordan, and

Robinson suggests that the site may have been at the modern ed-Deir on a hill on the south side of the wady, some three hours

from the Jordan, on the road from Beth-shean to Gerasa. Jabesh

was again an inhabited place in the time of Saul. The incidents

narrated in this chapter may help to explain the close relations

between the men of Jabesh-gilead and that king. *assembly*]

as in ver. 5.

9. *For the people &c.*] R.V. **For when the**

**people were numbered, behold &c.** 11. *utterly destroy*]

cp. xx. 48. See i. 17, note. 12. *unto the camp to Shiloh*]

On Shiloh see xviii. 31, note, and ver. 19, below. Here apparently

13 of Canaan. And the whole congregation sent *some* to speak to the children of Benjamin that *were* in the rock Rimmon, and  
 14 to call peaceably unto them. And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead: and yet so they sufficed  
 15 them not. And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.

16 Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? And they said, *There must be* an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a  
 18 tribe be not destroyed out of Israel. Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed *be* he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. Then they said, Behold, *there is* a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly *in a place which is* on the north side of Beth-el, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from  
 20 Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and  
 21 lie in wait in the vineyards; and see, and behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come

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it is thought of as a permanent camp like Gilgal or Mahaneh-dan.

*which is in the land of Canaan*] as distinguished from Jabesh-gilead, which was in Gilead. This expression, and also the topographical note in ver. 19, shows that Shiloh had become a site of merely antiquarian interest. 13. *sent some to speak*] lit. "sent and spake." *to call peaceably*] lit. "proclaim peace." 14.

*came again*] or "returned," i.e. to fellowship with the commonwealth of Israel. *wives*] lit. "the women." 17. *destroyed out of Israel*] or, "blotted out."

The word is not the same as in ver. 16. 19. *a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly*] Cp. 1 Sam. i. 3, 21, where a yearly pilgrimage to Shiloh is mentioned. This was at the close of the period of the Judges, and the ark was then at Shiloh. In our narrative the ark is at Bethel, and the festival at Shiloh appears to have a very local reputation. *which is on the north side &c.*] Definition of the situation of Shiloh, the mod. Seilûn, 2230 feet above sea-level, about 9½ m. from Bethel, and 11½ m. S. from Shechem. *Lebonah*] mod. el-Lubban, about 1 hr. N.W. from Seilûn. 21. *in dances*] Heb. "in the dances," i.e. in the annual festal dances. Dancing (to the sound of the tabret or flute) is frequently mentioned, or implied, as an element of religious festivity, both at the local shrines and at Jerusalem itself. Compare the dance of Mahanaim (Cant. vi. 13, R.V.); the name Abel-meholah (above, vii. 22); the story of Miriam (Ex. xv. 20); also 1 Sam. x. 5; Isa. xxx. 29; Ps. lxxviii. 25; cxlix. 3; cl. 4. The Mishna (*Taanith*, ad fin.) speaks of two days of the year, in late summer and autumn, in which the daughters of Jerusalem

ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come 22 unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes : because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war : for ye did not give unto them at *this* time, *that* you should be guilty. And the children of 23 Benjamin did so, and took *them* wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught : and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them. And the children of Israel departed 24 thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance. In those days *there was* no king in Israel : every man did *that* 25 which *was* right in his own eyes.

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went forth and danced in the vineyards, inviting the attention of would-be suitors. Here also the dance in the vineyards seems to imply that the feast was in autumn, the vintage season; cp. ix. 27. At Megara and other places in Greece similar dances are still practised at Easter-tide. 22. *Be favourable...guilty*] These words seem fairly to represent the general sense required. The Shilonites were not to be responsible, but would have to accept accomplished facts. Neither A.V. nor R.V. is quite satisfactory as a rendering of the present Hebrew text, which seems to be in some disorder.

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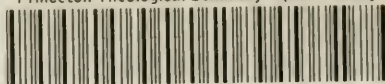
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